annie Clark

Nov: 11th: 1916

2

The Morning Psalms

THE

Morning Psalms

MEDITATIONS

FOR EVERY DAY IN THE YEAR

By the Author of "The Daily Round"

THOU GIVEST QUIETNESS OF HEART WITH MUCH PEACE AND PLEASANT JOY

LONDON
J. WHITAKER AND SONS
12 WARWICK LANE, PATERNOSTER ROW
M DCCC LXXXVIII

PREFACE.

THE devout in all ages of the Church have owned the Divine power of the Psalms. The place which they have held in the constant worship of God's people, in Jewish and in Christian times, shows how they have been felt to have no merely passing, or personal, or local meaning. In all the changing fortunes of the Church, the Psalms have been always found to express most fitly her sorrows, her faith, her hope, her thankful joy, her worship. As the life of each soul goes on, with its shifting lights and shadows, new and deeper meanings are found in the old familiar words. In times of peace, or conflict, or need, or doubt, or happiness, God seems to speak in the words of the Psalms always what the soul needs; and the best words seem to be supplied which the soul may use in answer.

The Book of Psalms is, above all else, a Book of Praise. Even in those Psalms which are a cry from the very deep of sorrow and spiritual loneliness there is a reaching up to the Most High; there is a real though trembling hold upon God, who is still God in all that His Name means.

There are many Psalms which the lowly and true long, but fear, to use. They tell of spiritual experience which is the blessedness of very few. But the words are inspired. Those who first spoke them, under the Divine guidance, were only struggling towards the high standard of which the Holy Spirit within them testified. The words are a promise of what the Holy Spirit can enable us to attain. They lift up our hopes, and rouse our efforts to reach after what they set before us. So we can praise God for that which is our aim, and of which we have the earnest, though as yet we know not how to make the words our own in all their full and glorious meaning.

There are Psalms, again, which seem to breathe a spirit wholly unlike that which is taught by the meek and lowly Master. But these words are not our own; we use them in the sense which He who inspired them means. We do not call down God's vengeance. We say no more than we do in the prayer "Thy Kingdom come." We praise God that He gives us warning of the doom that must come upon the manifold forces of strong evil which set themselves against the Almighty. We praise Him for the assurance that the evil which is in us shall be overthrown, and that God's kingdom and God's love shall triumph.

The aim of the Meditations in this Volume is to help those who are in the habit of using the Daily Psalms either in their private devotions or at church. It is important to dwell on each Psalm as a whole; it is important also to fix special attention on some central and suggestive text, so that the Divine teaching may come with more pointed clearness to the thought and feeling. A verse from the Morning Psalms of the day of the month is taken as the subject of each Meditation, and is treated in the light of the whole passage in which it stands. Little use has been made of the mystical interpretations, of which there is such wealth in the older Commentaries. They are interesting and suggestive; but, as a rule, hardly the most likely to help those for whom this work is meant.

Among the authors consulted are St. Augustine, Lorinus, Ayguanus, Dionysius Carthusianus, Musculus, Bakius, Calvin, Bythner, Wilcox, Jennings and Lowe, Hengstenberg, Delitzch, Neale and Littledale, Isaac Williams, and Spurgeon.

Daily Psalms.

BLESSED.

GOD is blessed; for God is Love. There is pure bliss in the perfection of what He is, and in the energy of love always going forth in blessing to His creatures. He is the Source of all blessing, and of all power in man to be blessed. To know this, to act on it, and to meet God's love with thankful trust, is the way to find good. To own always, in heart and word and life, the worth of the Divine blessing is to be as those happy ones who abide in the Home of the blessed. To live that others may share the good things which we have learned to prize, is to live a godlike life.

God is true to Himself, and to the Name by which He makes Himself known. He is faithful to those to whom He has given life, with all its possibilities of joy and woe. He has made us for good, not for evil. We have rights in Him as our Creator, and He will not fail the work of His hands. He has made us His in a new way, and given us a new claim on Him by the work of Christ. The new life is His gift, which He is pledged to care for. He is ready to bestow the will and power that we may live so as to please Him and have His blessing. While we trust Him as our Guide in the way of well-doing, we can trust Him to keep us safely.

The end of blessing is not mere unclouded happiness. Those who are most like God have a tender thought and care for others, which is not without some shade of sadness. It is not freedom from earthly trial that makes the blessedness of God's people. Rather is trial often a helpful sign of the Divine care that none of the blessing meant for them be lost.

God's blessing is not in word only; it is with power: what He speaks is done. It is Almighty love willing and working all highest good, in all best ways, as each needs. That love cares first for man's spiritual and eternal well-being. It bestows the good things of this world as he can bear them. It gladdens him with the manifold pleasant things that brighten life. It makes the small frets of daily work, and the vexing thorns of the uphill path, as well as life's great sorrows and hard fights, means of gain; so that all things blend in one harmonious plan of good.

In everything the blessed can give thanks. The voice of joy and peace is never silent, even in the hour of sorest pain and darkest conflict. In sorrow man's hold on God is tested, and he is roused to make it sure. He learns the worth of lasting good, and is led to seek most earnestly the gifts which are the best,—which change what man is, rather than what he has. It is not those whose blessedness the world can trace, but often those who seem to have lost all, who can say with fullest meaning and surest right, "Blessed be the Name of the Lord."

Have we with true heart placed ourselves in the keeping of the Eternal? Can we trust that in all our life we watch to put sin from us, and to draw nigh to a God who draws nigh to us? Are we in sympathy with the God of love, and earnest to be fellow-workers with the Almighty in the cause of holiness? If so, then, whatever our outward lot may be, we are among the blessed. It is surely well with us at all times; for God is on our side, and our will is one with His. His love can have its free course in making us what He would have us be, and bringing us to all the good with which He seeks to bless us. Happy are we if "the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon us," and we are able to "commit the keeping of our souls to Him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator."

"*His delight is in the law of the Lord.*"—Ps. i. 2.

GOD'S law makes God known. It tells us what He wills and what He is as our God. It reveals the holiness and goodness of Him with whom we have to do. We are evil, and we live in the midst of evil. We know not of ourselves how to find and to follow the narrow way which alone is safe. We rejoice to know that God's thoughts and ways are not as those of man. We thank God for the law that comes to us from His mind and heart, unfolding before us what is indeed wise, and noble, and pure, and lovely. We thank God for all that is left in us, or is renewed in us, of power to see the beauty of His law, and feel its worth, and yield to its control.

We learn from it, not only wherein we fail, but to what we may attain; what we ought to be, and what God means for us. God's law is to us no mere hard set of rules and warnings: it is full of hope and promise. There is blessedness in being of those to whom God gives His law. For thus He shows that He does not will to leave us alone to go on as we are, or to fall farther from Him, but calls us to Him and to holiness. When we find the law of sin working in our old evil nature, leading to sin and working death, we turn with thankfulness to the holy law of our Father, made known in the Gospel of Christ and written in our hearts by the Holy Spirit.

What nobler study than the law of the infinitely wise and good for the ordering of the lives and shaping of the characters of beings meant to show forth His glory as His sons! We search humbly and earnestly the spirit and the inner meaning of the law. We strive to put our whole selves under the influence of God's will, of which the spoken law is a partial and suggestive revelation. We strive so to learn the law of the Lord that we may know the mind of the Lord and grow to be one with it. There is delight to be found in the law when first it shows the height to which it calls and leads. What growing delight as it works with the Divine power of the Spirit, purifying the life and bringing order into all our being! What rapture when its work is finished in us, and we are where the glory of its perfect wisdom and loveliness are seen by purified natures in the very presence of the Lord!

"I will praise Thee, O Lord, with my whole heart; I will show forth all Thy marvellous works."—Ps. ix. 1.

GOD looks for praise from the whole man. Where true gratitude is, the feelings are aroused by thought, and in their turn move the will to action. God is so great a theme of praise, His works are so manifold and full of wonder; that all the strength of all man's powers, when put forth to the full, must fail and fall far short.

Who can worthily give proof of the knowledge and the feeling that he has! Yet we may do our best to lay before God the praise which is His due. Let us think of the outfit of varied powers with which we were born; of the mystery of body, soul, and spirit, and of their marvellous growth. How many evils have we been spared! from how many have we been saved, into which we were falling by our own fault or rashness! Let us think of our spiritual blessings and deliverances: our birth in a Christian land; our new birth of water and the Spirit; the presence of Christ to strengthen and cheer with His own indwelling life; the sins from which we have been saved, or for which we have been forgiven; the manifold privileges and gifts of grace!

Reason and will must join with the affections. In all we are and speak and do we must resolve to show the glory of the Lord. He makes us what we cannot be of ourselves, and enables us for triumphs over sin and for works of holiness which are only possible by God working in us. We cannot learn much of all there is to be known which tells of Divine love and wisdom. The marvels of Nature are past our finding out; we can trace but a small part of the mystery that is everywhere around us. When we try to lift our thoughts to heavenly things, and search out the dealings of Providence and the workings of grace, we are awed and humbled by our helplessness. All our efforts to realise their full meaning and worth fail; all our efforts to give God the praise that is due fall mournfully short. He knows our infirmity. We praise Him as we can for what we know; we praise Him for all which it shall be the joy of Eternity to explore and to proclaim, and for the powers of devotion which shall be given to us in that higher state.

"Who shall abide in Thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in Thy holy hill?"—PS. XV. 1.

GOD is in heaven. There are His temple and His eternal throne. There He receives the adoration and homage of the holy ones who see Him as He is. Though we are citizens of heaven, we are still on earth in our state of trial, and there is much that as yet we are not fitted to see or to enjoy.

But God does indeed dwell with man. The tabernacle of God is with men, since God in Christ took flesh and came to abide with us.

Even now we can know that we are called and welcomed as God's friends where He makes His special Presence known. Nay, more, we can hold frank communion with Him, as children who love always to feel their Father's nearness. There is a holy hill where we may go apart with our Lord, above the world's care and evil; where faith gains a wider, clearer view; where glimpses of the Divine glory are granted, and we may learn more and more how good it is to hear the teaching of the Son of God.

But who can hope to abide in such nearness to God, high out of reach of all that harms? Only those who are of like mind with God can dwell with Him. Only as we grow in likeness to Him can that state of privilege to which we are called last on. Those who would enter where God is, must knock with faith and prayer and true desire. Those who would rest upon the holy hill of God, and breathe its pure air, must firmly turn their backs on sin, and climb the steep path towards holiness. "He that dwelleth in love dwelleth" not only with, but "in God, and God in him." We depart from the living God when faith fails to keep us ever gaining from Him in the ways of which He tells, and manifesting for Him in the ways of which He tells, the love which is His very being. We abide in His love while we keep His commandments, and show for love of Him the love which worketh no ill to his neighbour.

What a gift is this that the grace of God in Christ brings within our reach! Even while here we can abide always where He shelters us, as if under His own roof, from life's storms. We can live so that we and our work shall be for ever. God will prepare us by His grace for His glory. He will fit us to appear before Him in the temple on the heavenly Zion.

"*The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth His handiwork.*"—Ps. xix. 1.

WE cannot see God, but we can see what tells of Him. What seem the least and lowliest of His works bear the mark of wisdom that overlooks nothing and of skill that does all things well. The fly that lives but for a day has each organ perfect for that one day's use and enjoyment. The microscope can find no sign of hasty work in the flower that blooms as if only to wither.

The wonders of the sky have always been felt most powerfully to lead the mind up to Nature's God. Their vastness, their number, their orderly movements fill us with awe before the Maker and Ruler of them all. There is a burst of eloquence in the witness of each day; there is new store of Divine knowledge in the varied revelations of each night. Not to men of one race or tongue only is the glory of God thus proclaimed. The soundless language of the heavens has plain meaning to all who will give heed and learn. God is not without witness anywhere while the marvels of the sky make known His glory. The heavens, like the written Word, teach nothing to those whose eyes are only for the earth, and who have no heart to search after what may be known of God. In the twofold revelation the earnest are ever finding answers to their questions, and patient, lowly diligence is rewarded.

The stars of heaven are figures of the apostles and of those whom Christ sent forth to shine upon the world, bearing light from the Divine Source of light. They bear one message to men of all lands, making known God's glory in Jesus Christ. They win men to glorify their Father in heaven by the silent power of the works which God does in them and by their means. Through those who are His handiwork and the triumphs of His grace, shining as lights in the world, He declares His glory, and brings the influences of heaven to the minds and hearts of men. Thus He sheds light upon the world's dark places, making the narrow way plain, and cheering us on while we walk in it. We have an unceasing witness to the presence of that God whose name is Love, and who declares His glory when He shows His love, which is Himself.

"*The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof.*"—Ps. xxiv. 1.

THE Lord chose a place in His own world for His special abode. When the ark was borne to Zion, a throne was set up for Him who was King over all and ruled by His presence everywhere. At His word the world took form; He set in their place the land and waters, and He orders them by His ever-acting will. He gave the beginnings of life, and the powers by which all things grow and are fruitful.

All men are God's care; though they know Him not, He owns them as His creatures, and meets with bounty the claim which their dependence on Him gives. Those are accepted by Him who fear Him and work righteousness, as far as their light guides them. His people, to whom He has clearly revealed Himself, are not parted from Him, even though they cannot come to the place of His special presence. He is still near to them, though they are far from their own land. He follows them with the blessings of His salvation.

We have nothing of our own. We are His; and all we enjoy we partake of at our Father's table. We ask for what we need. What we have we own to be His, and ask to receive with His blessing. So there is in all our life, and in all we have, ever new ground for trust and praise.

God claims the kingdoms of this world as the kingdom of His Anointed One. Into all the world Christ sends His heralds to say in His Name, "All souls are Mine." Each of us has his part to do in making known the rights of Christ and in enforcing them. The Church is His new creation. Out of the deep of human nature, sunk in its darkness and ruin, He raised it by the power of His word. He upholds it above the floods of evil and of the world's hate, which threaten to overwhelm it. Whatever light and fruitfulness for good it has are from Him; the means of grace convey His life. He shines on it and makes it shine. He quickens in it manifold forms of spiritual life, and enriches it with manifold fruits of righteousness. Even from the floods and seas that rage against it He draws the dews and rains which help to make it fruitful. We are in the hand of our Maker and Redeemer. We are in the midst of what tells of His power and grace. We can live for His praise, while we do and enjoy all things for His glory.

"*I will extol Thee, O Lord; for Thou hast lifted me up.*"
Ps. xxx. 1.

DAVID had fallen, as it seemed, past hope. His foes thought him cast off by God, left to sink down unhelped in the shame and ruin of his sin. But his cry of pain and of repentant faith was heard, his soul was kept from death, and he was brought back from darkness. In the joy of restoration he praises God, whose grace has lifted him up and made him strong.

So Christ, the Son of David, after man's sin has brought Him low, and His enemies have seemed to have Him helplessly in their power, rises even from the place of the dead. God has declared Him to be the Son of God with power, and has crowned Him with glory and honour. Now He feels not pain or weakness. He cannot die. In the glory of His risen life He shows forth the glory of God. That human nature, brought down for the sake of sinners to the lowest depths, is raised even to God's right hand. It rests in the highest place of honour and rule. Now there is an answer to Christ's prayer, "Father, glorify Thy Name."

The Ascension was followed by the coming of the Holy Spirit to build up the Church in which God should dwell and make His presence known. We have a part, as members of Christ, in His glory, as in His sufferings. God has raised us up and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ. Our true life is hid with Him there, however we may seem cast down and forsaken. We lift up thankful hearts for this great truth, which we know to be real and firm. We praise God for each new way by which we are able to claim and realise our part in Christ's exaltation, and for each new sign that it is not in vain for us. We praise God humbly for each fresh token of grace, which tells that through Christ we are able to triumph always.

From what sin and helplessness did the Divine love call us at first! From how many and sad falls has the ready, patient, strong hand of God lifted us, when we might have gone down into the hopeless deep of sin! What privileges are given to us, as those who have the hope of glory and honour and immortality! Be it ours to show forth God's praises with hearts lifted heavenwards, and lives raised above the world, and natures freed from all that dishonours God.

"Plead Thou my cause, O Lord, with them that strive with me: fight against them that fight against me."—PS. xxxv. 1.

WE are vowed to be God's true soldiers. In the war to which He calls us we trust our cause to Him; for we know that it is His own. We may feel, like David, that our sin has put us in the power of those who are against our souls, and that we must bear the pain of much humbling conflict. Yet with no doubt we bring all before Him. We have, indeed, let evil gain hold on us, and weaken our will and strength for good. We are more or less in bonds, and we cannot by ourselves break free. Many and mighty foes seek our fall. But God has had no parley with these foes. In our watching and struggling with evil we can know that we are one with the Almighty. He will draw nigh with all needful help, if we draw nigh to Him. He will stop the way of temptation, if it is our honest wish and aim to be kept safe from evil.

When the shield of faith is held up, God is between our souls and harm. We can ask help, even in the trials which God allows to vex us on account of our sins. The struggle may last on, and we may find no outward peace: perhaps what seems so hard and humbling is part of the answer to our prayer against spiritual foes. Perhaps in this way God pleads the cause of our souls, and fights the strong evil that threatens to destroy us. God may thus seem to be against us, when He indeed takes our side in the wisest and most careful way. When we ask God to take our part, we must not question the means by which He gives us victory.

Blessed is that war in which our cause and God's are the same. If the fight be long, and we find it hard to hold firm, this warns us how great our danger is from so fierce and strong a foe. God must win, and we can share His triumph if we will. Knowing this, there should be little power in the temptation to seek peace for a while at the cost of being ranked among the foes of God. We look for the peace which a well-fought war brings, and which lasts for ever, where none shall make us afraid. We praise God that we can cast our care on Him. We pray that we may have care, and trust it to Him as we ought. We pray that in us there may be no want of faith or faithfulness, which might betray us to our foe and make His grace in vain.

"Lord, all my desire is before Thee; and my groaning is not hid from Thee."—PS. XXXVIII. 9.

WE know not fully or clearly what is wrong with us and what we need. Often we are like children, unable to explain, even to ourselves, the wants we feel. The enlarged capacity for good which God's Spirit gives awakens a mysterious craving after higher things. We are daunted and bewildered by our slowness in reaching upward and by the poorness of our desires. Words fail us, too, when care and shame crowd, and we try to find relief in prayer.

Each bodily suffering and grief of mind has its own history, and all bear upon one another. When men reproach, the voice of conscience speaks too; and both tell of the reproof of God, who knoweth all things. We trace the course of our sorrows up to the sin which has been their source, direct or indirect, near or far off. We are confused by the many upbraiding voices that mingle and echo in our hearts. The same "foolishness" which has had to do with bringing us down so low, makes us unable to utter our complaint. We can only lay ourselves before God, with a more or less articulate cry of pain from the "disquietness of our heart."

But so we begin to find rest. God knows the desire which He Himself has given to prepare us for what He wills that we should possess and should become. Not according to our knowledge of what to pray for as we ought does He hear and help, but according to the wideness with which the Spirit opens our beings to receive. The prayers which seem so feeble and unworthy have a meaning and a worth to God beyond what we can tell. They are to Him our struggles to unite with the Spirit who maketh intercession for us.

Here is indeed comfort, that our Father knows our wants and cares not only for those we feel but for those which we are too foolish to understand. He weighs the griefs that make up the heart's secret bitterness and press from it the cry of pain which no man hears. He knows them all in their first cause and their earliest course, in the pain they cost us now, and in their end. So we can trust One to whom our case is plain as it is not to ourselves. We put and keep ourselves before Him, and in our felt ignorance and weakness faith gains for us the peace of God.

"*We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, what work Thou didst in their days, in the times of old.*"—Ps. xliv. 1.

GOD'S people could not despair so long as their hearts were true to God. The past was not to them something that had been and was gone: it was a possession; it told them of the one God, ever strong and true. They were the children of their fathers, and the word of promise, kept to them in the times of old, had not worn out. They loved to listen again and again to the records which marked them as God's chosen. The harder their lot, the fiercer their struggles, the more fast they clung to that which gave them a proud feeling of glory and strength and hope. They could bear the worst in the present, and face the darkest in the future, while they knew that the God of their fathers was still their God.

We ought, like them, to live more in what has been, that we may be stronger to meet what is and what is coming. Greater works than those done in Egypt and in the wilderness and in Canaan encourage the spiritual Israel. The existence of the Church of God tells of signs and wonders wrought in old time, and of power always at work in her and for her. Our temptations are such as are common unto man, and men of like passions with us have endured and triumphed in the strength of a faithful God. We are one with the Church in the first days. The one life which quickened all saints in the days of old is that by which our souls live.

Oh for ears more open to hear aright, so as to learn the full meaning of the church's history, and lose no lesson of faith and hope and love that it offers! Oh to see God more plainly as the Worker, using men as His voice and hand, ruling and overruling even what has been most defiant of His watchful, sure, holy will! We do well to praise God for what He has done; bringing ourselves into His presence, that the Holy Spirit may witness anew to those truths and make brighter their glory and their promise. Nothing is too hard for His power, nothing too small to be His care. We ask for more of our fathers' faith, and wait upon our fathers' God to help us with His almighty love.

"*Gather My saints together unto Me; those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice.*"—Ps. l. 5.

THERE comes a time when God will rise up to judgment, and each shall know his own state and doom. The world and the Church are apart even now; then judgment shall begin at the house of God, and out of it shall be cast those that offend and that do iniquity. Called to be saints, we may fail to be chosen among the holy. Numbered in the Church on earth, we may be found unfit for the Church on high. Saved out of Egypt, we may fail to reach the safe rest of the Holy Land. We may be still of the world, with our hearts there and still far from God, though living outwardly as fellow-citizens with the saints. Our birthright may be sold, and gone for ever. Our broken vows and wasted privileges may rise up to make our judgment sure.

Here is our danger. But what a blessed hope is ours! The name God gives us is a promise of what we may by His grace become. Members of the "holy nation," the powers that make men holy are our heritage. "Partakers of the Divine nature" through Christ, the command "be ye holy for I am holy" tells us of that relationship to the one source of holiness, which is ours by the new birth of the Spirit. We are in covenant with God. He has of His own free grace bound Himself to us. In the gift of His Son He has pledged to us all good things. In the sacrifice on the Cross He has reconciled us unto Himself. We are told how to draw nigh and claim our part in God.

Baptized into Christ we were baptized into His death, which was the one sacrifice for sin. When we show that death and make a remembrance of that sacrifice, we renew our covenant. In our acts of worship and of holy service, which all gain worth and meaning from union with that sacrifice, we draw nigh to our covenant God; praising Him for His gracious promises, and obeying His word, which teaches us how to seek their fulfilment. We look forward in hope, treasuring the earnest of the Spirit which has begun in us the good sanctifying work of God. We are careful to work out our salvation from sin by the power that worketh in us. So when we are gathered to the judgment, God will gather us to Himself as those who have kept the covenant.

"*What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee.*"—Ps. lvi. 3.

THE disciple is not above his Master. We must be as He was in conflict and in the feeling of it. True man, and sure that His Father heard Him always, Christ failed neither in feeling nor in faith. All His passion, with all that made it hard to meet and to bear, was before Him. He was alone, far from all help but God's. He opened not His lips to breathe His grief to any ear of man. The great fear that fell upon His soul, and under which His flesh sank, told of the strong courage with which His willing Spirit went on, and the firm grasp with which He clung to God's strength.

We do not cease to be men, though we cease to trust in ourselves and begin to cast all our care on God. Rather do we find out then the force that is against us, and all there is to make us afraid. Each step of life has new meaning. The worth of our souls is felt. We learn how weak we are to hold our own, how sorely beset with snares and foes our whole path is. The time of our sojourning on earth is short; and we pass it in fear, lest by our fault now we lose the never-ending hereafter. God works in us to will and do; no wonder that we fear and tremble lest we fail to work aright with Him, and so spoil His work of our salvation. Evil rises within us, and is hard to crush; sin seems all around us, in many forms, and striking at us in many ways. Spiritual wickedness in high places dares us to the fight with a sort of scorn. And the common griefs of life do not lose their painfulness. Nay, they are felt not only as sorrows that bruise the spirit, but as temptations that vex the soul.

When we are driven out alone and all other aid is far away, we look up for God and find how near He is. When we are afraid, we can show the quiet fearlessness of those who trust in God. But for what makes us afraid, we should never learn what cause we have to trust. Knowledge of our danger and our weakness leads to knowledge of God. When we are ready to sink in the deep waters, we feel the firm hand of Him who bids us not to fear, who stills our hearts and makes the storm a calm. He is the same always. We are not the same always, and our lot changes. What time we are afraid, or some new dread disquiets us, our faith should take new hold, and draw fresh grace to make us strong in the Lord.

"*Truly my soul waiteth upon God: from Him cometh my salvation.*"—Ps. lxii. 1.

THE soul that trusts in its own strength or wisdom finds no rest. The soul that looks to man in its need is ever full of doubt and care. To walk by sight is to be at the mercy of outward things which change and pass away. Only God can save. Only His love is to be trusted to put forth power to save. From Him came the Saviour, and through that ever-present Saviour is ever coming forth the Divine grace by which God's saving work goes on.

We come to that fount from which grace flows to us. We open our eyes to see by the light that shines. We stretch forth the hand to take what is given. Where we are called we go. What we are bidden we do. If we are to be saved, it must be in God's way. But we keep in mind that the hem of the garment which we touch is but that by which the virtue of God which is in Christ Jesus reaches us. We are thankful to be led where the streams of grace flow; but we remember the fountain of Divine love that fills them. We receive through them, but from Him.

When we have trusted our higher and eternal interests to God, it ought not to be hard to be without carefulness about the things of time. If the greater are in His hands, we can leave the lesser with Him too. God, sought and clung to, is near for all help in all need of all kind. All things are bent by Him towards the full working out of our salvation. So when earthly helpers fail, God is a rock and defence still: when they bring us help, it comes from God by their hand.

Knowing all this, we look past things that change, past man who fails either in will or in power to help; we look past what God uses to bear to us His strength and cheer and light. We wait on God, who alone saves, and who saves for ever. And, as the words mean, we are in silence before Him. His shelter spreads a calm over our souls, even when storms are fierce all round us. We do not plead against what is the will of God. We bow meekly, while He so works out His ends that He may bless us with His peace at last. We do not ask to hasten Him, but we wait on in patience, stilling the voice of our own weakness. We know that from God is our salvation, and that it surely "cometh."

"*Let God arise, let His enemies be scattered: let them also that hate Him flee before Him.*"—Ps. lxviii. 1.

THE words are like those which Moses spoke when, day by day, the ark set forward to lead the people in their march. God is everywhere always, and His might works on. But He does not show always in the same way the signs of His Presence. He does not awe men out of their power to serve Him freely. He gives to foes time for repentance. When He rises and "cometh forth out of His place," all that has stood up against Him passes away. As He moves on, leading those whose trusted God He is, the path is clear. So it was when Christ arose, proved to be the Son of God with power. Before the breath of the living Word of God the darkness that hid truth was scattered. Before the fire of the Spirit of love which made His Presence real and felt, hard hearts were softened, mocking changed to fear, and hatred to devotion.

Those who love not God, and yet must fear Him, have no place to hide where His eye does not track them and His voice warn them. They cannot escape. But their vaunting ends, and they shrink in fear, when God's Presence is made plain. Those who are His enemies, who hate Him because they know Him not, fear when He reveals Himself. But while, as enemies, they are scattered, they draw near as those who long to love Him. They ask that the smoke of error and falsehood which has hidden Him may pass away before His light, and that their hearts may be softened by His love.

We pray Him to raise up His great power and lead us safely on through the difficulties of our desert way. All is well if God arise to drive away the enmity of our hearts, and if we arise and follow Him. He will give us tokens of His Presence to cheer us, and signs to mark the turnings of the path by which He would have us go. Then our part is but to go forward. The hosts of sin will yield, when it is plain that the Lord fighteth for us, and that our cause is His. Satan will flee, when we move on calmly in the way of duty, strong in the strength of Him to whom we have drawn nigh, and who we know has drawn nigh to us. The full triumph of the Church comes when God arises to scatter for ever the evil which His love has borne with so long. Then also comes the full triumph of each true soul.

"*Be Thou my strong habitation, whereunto I may continually resort: Thou hast given commandment to save me; for Thou art my rock and my fortress.*"—Ps. lxxi. 3.

WE have a home always within reach. To God we can turn from the loneliness, the toil, the care, the war of life. He hides and shelters all who come to Him, and they go forth with new nerve and power. To hold communion with Him is to lose our weakness in His might, and gain fresh boldness to meet whatever we are called to do or to bear. He has "given commandment to save us," and the word that speaks His will works it. "He has not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ."

God is a Rock that cannot be shaken, a fortress that no force can overthrow, a rest where the weary ever find a welcome. We must know our need. We must learn what God is to those who seek and find Him, and know well our way to Him, so that the grace which waits to save may not be in vain. We must, by the prayer which faith prompts, and by the faith which is a ceaseless prayer, ask Him to be our help and peace always. Sin is strong around us; it is hard not to be drawn into the common ways of thought and life of those who are without or against God. The world hates God, who judges its sin and makes His firm claim of right over it. The world cannot reach God, and so it spends its malice on those who take His side. But this is not all. We long to be righteous: but a power within us fights against our higher self.

Who shall save us and keep us safe in an evil world? Who shall deliver us from the body of this death, so close to us as if part of our very selves? God lifts us where no foe can climb. He is Himself a dwelling that we can think of as our spirits' home. In the midst of a crowd who know us not we can say, "My Father;" and can feel that we have gone apart with Him and are roofed over and walled round. The tribulation of the world makes us more glad of the love of Him who has said, "In Me ye shall have peace." As we turn aside in thought, closing the ears of our spirits to all but God's voice, and speaking only to Him, we know that His ear is bent down to listen, and that He is saving us. We learn to pray always, and to live so that our special resorts to Him may be means by which our continual life with Him is closer.

"*Unto Thee do we give thanks: for that Thy Name is near Thy wondrous works declare.*"—Ps. lxxv. 1.

SO Israel was taught to feel and to sing when the hosts of Assyria overspread the land. They called to mind what their God had been to them in the past. So they knew that God was at hand, One to be praised as a sure hope. God is near to us; He makes Himself known. In His Name we can face whatever is against us, as David met Goliath. We think of all that is revealed of God; and that Name that brings God before our thoughts makes us bold.

That Name is near. God shows that He is not far off by the blessings which His love gives. They often come in strange ways, so that we know not what God is doing till the end is ours. He often helps by means which, while they do His work, hide Him. God is near all, watching their whole course, ruling the world that He seems to leave to go on by itself. In another way, He is near those whose faith sees Him, and who draw nigh for the good things of which His nearness is the pledge. He is near that we may know and feel Him near, and that He may be a safeguard and a joy to us. Strong and glad in the great truth that God is near, we praise Him in spite of all else that may be near. Each danger or hard task brings His Name nearer, showing Him to be indeed a true stronghold and Saviour.

We tell ourselves, we tell others, we bless God for the wonders of the past. So we cheer and brace ourselves in our darkest times. Our life and our body are wonders worked by Him, and He has upheld them hitherto. We can trust ourselves to the faithful Creator, who has not forsaken His own works, but makes them still His care. And when we think of the Word made flesh for us, and of all the wonders of the works of grace, we cannot but bless God for all of which this is the promise. We know that He will freely give all things to those for whom He did not spare His Son. That Son has "declared" the Father's Name, and "will declare it." He is with us, so that seeing Him by faith and abiding in His saving love, we can "see the Father," and know ourselves His children. He who has made us sons, and joint-heirs with His Son, will keep us for that which is reserved for us in heaven.

"*O God, the heathen are come into Thine inheritance; Thy holy temple have they defiled; they have laid Jerusalem on heaps.*"—Ps. lxxix. 1.

ONLY a Jew could tell the shame and grief which the Jews felt when their city was in heathen hands. Even those whose sin had most to do with bringing down the stroke of the Chaldæan sword would feel a shame and bitterness deeper than that of men worsted in war. The Jew's boast was in his God. His religion it was that gave him a proud place above the rest of men. This was true of the most ungodly. What must have been the shock to the devout, when God left the place of His Presence to be dishonoured and laid waste! That was a sign to them of the sin by which that holy place had been profaned.

We who are of the spiritual Israel ought to have a feeling keen like theirs. The Church is His inheritance, claimed as His own by the work of Christ. Its citizens are more than His servants; they are His children and His heirs. How strong and painful should our jealousy be when hands are weak and hearts are faint which ought to defend God's cause, and when holy things are given over as a prey to the ungodly and a sport to the profane! How should we mourn in our prayer, when God is insulted where He ought to meet with the true homage of adoring hearts!

And even when all seems outwardly prosperous we may feel that the influences and principles of the world have overthrown the rule of God. The worship of the Church may grow to be a mere form, which has lost the quickening spirit of devotion and is defiled by low and worldly aims. Where the peace of the living God reigned, there may be instead the quiet which tells that life has gone. And in our own natures there may be the same departing from God, followed by the loss of the Divine protection and presence. The temple of the Holy Ghost may be an empty dishonoured shrine, used as if God had no rights in it, where no sacrifice is offered and God hears no prayer or praise. Yet God is still our God, to whom we can cry. He can drive out the powers of evil that have overcome us. He can cleanse the defilements of worldliness and sin. He can make His temple glorious by the indwelling of a welcomed Saviour.

"*Bow down Thine ear, O Lord, hear me: for I am poor and in misery.*"—PS. lxxxvi. 1.

CHRIST looked up to His Father from the depth of that poverty to which for our sakes He humbled Himself. He bowed to bear even the woe which man feels when sin has sunk him far from God. Throwing Himself into the feeling of those whose sins cloud Heaven from them, He cried out of the darkness, seeking the face of His God. His words teach us and give us hope in our need and misery. We know that He prays with us when we cry from the deep.

We may have fallen low in sin, or be cast down in sorrow; heaven may seem too high and far away for us ever to reach; but we are not too far for the All-merciful to bend down His ear to listen. He to whom all hearts are open and all desires speak, bows down to care for the needs of the true and earnest. The poor and the mourners and the persecuted have in their miseries a claim on God; they can spread out all that tries them before the Lord, seeing in faith His promise written on each. He gives to those who want. He lightens grief by lessening its load, or by adding strength to bear it. He makes friends of foes, either by disarming their ill-will or by turning their curses into blessings.

When we find out our spiritual need, and in our misery turn to God as our one hope, we are already far on towards finding all good. The poor in spirit are at once rich, when in faith they call upon the King to hear them. The mourners for sin find comfort, even as they sigh to Him whose joy it is to give peace. They who know that their souls starve away from God, begin to be filled with righteousness when they seek, however feebly, to the Source of righteousness.

God giveth grace to the lowly. Our unworthiness does not check His mercy: to own and mourn it is to prepare for gaining enough for all our want. Where God bows down the ear, He reaches down the helping hand. He draws us to Him even by the want and misery of our earthly state, teaching us of deeper needs and sorer woes. He says, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee;" and so enables us to be of good cheer, even though we still bear the trials which those know who are poor except in faith, and sad but for their joy in the everlasting God.

"*Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations.*"
Ps. xc. 1.

THE words speak thankfulness and hope. Generations come and go, and the place that has known them knows them no more. Men die and pass away; others are born, so that the race lasts, and its activity goes on unchecked. God cares for each soul that He has made, and gives it its time and place. All the while He works out His own ends with the power and the calmness of the Infinite and the Eternal. He has for ever to work in, so He is not hurried. And in a moment of time, if He so wills, He can do what He sees good.

The Church does not depend upon the life of those who at any time are upon earth. She lives by the life of God. The homeless Israelites, ever shifting their camp and pitching their tents amid new, strange scenes, felt the worth of a dwelling-place. They found their one true rest in God, who was always with them, and with whom they might always be. We are, like them, pilgrims who seek a country, and who pass from one scene in earth's wilderness of toil and war to another, till we reach the promised land, the home we long for. There is the rest in God, which those have whom His love makes safe and glad for ever. He who is the home of those whose wanderings are ended, is the shelter giving quiet peace even in the midst of our long, hard pilgrimage. We are one with them; we share one life, and the overshadowing of the same strong love.

We do not go from under that Divine shelter when we reach the end of our course here. God is still our dwelling-place, in the state of rest as well as in that which leads to it. God is more than a refuge, a retreat to which we can flee when evil comes fiercely against us, or when the world's work and cares have worn us out. Under His shelter we can do our daily duties and find our joys good. We can have the peace of God, even while around us the world's noise is loud. We can in spirit be at rest, though in the midst of wearing strife and cares. All generations have found in God their safe dwelling-place; and He is ours. He has called us to close union with Him. We abide in Him by keeping His commandments, and by the devout use of all those means through which the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is received unto eternal life.

"*O come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us make a joyful noise to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving.*"—Ps. xcv. 1, 2.

THERE are joys which only those know who know God. We ought to set before us what those joys are. Our hearts should overflow with praise. We should call others to share those joys and the joy of praising God for them. There is a joy which is apart from God and ends in heaviness. There is a sorrow which none know but those who have learned God's love in salvation. Our joy is in the good things which God gives, and in Himself. That joy is gratitude and love and hope towards Him. We mourn for sin, while we rejoice in Him who takes sin away. Our sorrow for what we have been measures our joy in what God is.

God is the Rock of our salvation, firm and sure. While our faith holds fast to Him, all the dangers which beset us and the trials we bear give new meaning to our joy in God. We rejoice that He is, and that He is what He is. We rejoice in the rights in Him which He in His mercy gives. We come before Him with all our thought and heart and will, and by our voice and example we bid others join to make the offering great. We call the godless to learn God's goodness, that they may adore Him. We call those who in heart and mind and word own their Lord, to come aside from all that distracts and join in the sacrifice of praise.

The songs which tell our feeling help to deepen it. As we praise, we find out more fully what cause we have to praise. Coming near to God, we get to see in Him the unfailing source of all that can make us blessed. God has saved us by Christ's work, and has taken us into union with Him, so that the power of that work is in us. He saves us by all those workings of grace which guard from sin and harm, and keep up the soul's union with the life of Christ. He wills to save us to the end, bringing us beyond the reach of evil to share the triumph of our Saviour. If we feel this, we cannot be silent. As the love of God rejoices over what His grace does for and in us, so must we rejoice, and with voice and life show our joy, that this God is our God. Love to God will make us love those whom He loves, and seek to lead them to share in our blessings and our praise.

"*Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favour her, yea, the set time, is come.*"—Ps. cii. 13.

GOD'S people in their exile did not forget Jerusalem. They mourned and prayed, with thought and heart turned towards the ruins of their holy city. There God had met with them, and His presence had been their glory. Now His house was laid waste. The heathen ruled in the sacred places, and God seemed to have given over His people for a prey. Disaster had humbled them before the God whom their sin had provoked. They knew that He who lived for ever would fulfil the promises made to the fathers; but each sighed to see in his own day the time of mercy come.

We know more of the meaning of God's promises. We have a better hope than any knew of before Christ sent the Holy Ghost to build up the spiritual Zion. How deep ought to be our interest in all that has to do with the well-being of the Church! How really her sorrows should be felt as our own! How humbly should we blame ourselves for our part in her sin! With what zeal should we plead with God to arise and show His mercy in restoring what has been overthrown, and in making Jerusalem a praise and a blessing in the earth! It is our shame if the world rules where God set up His kingdom, and if holy things and holy places are profaned. It is our shame if the Church of our God is trampled down and scorned by her foes. We think of what she was in the days of her strength and purity, when she bore witness boldly to the truth of Christ and withstood the assaults of an evil, envious world. We think of what she shall be when God rises up in mercy and in power to fulfil His plan.

We love the remains of old and better days, and cling in thankful hope to that which bears a promise of better days to come. "How long, O Lord?" is our cry—not of despair, not only of sad humiliation, but of hope in the eternal God whose she is. We remember how solemnly prayer binds to duty. We arise and build as we can; we do our part in furthering the end for which we pray, that each living stone in the spiritual temple may rest upon the true foundation, and may have a sure place in union with Christ. So we show our faith and love to God, and hasten the time when He shall arise in mercy to turn our mourning into joy.

"O give thanks unto the Lord; call upon His Name: make known His deeds among the people."—Ps. cv. 1.

IN words of this psalm David taught Israel to praise God, when the ark was restored to Zion. The heathen had felt God's power, and He had proved anew how jealously He guarded His own honour, and watched over His people with mercy. How often have we seemed to lose the presence of God by our sin, and to fall into the hands of our spiritual foes! And how often has God, by His own might and goodness, given back to us again the lost grace and joy, of which we had proved ourselves unworthy! We have brought scorn and insult upon Him; He has been blasphemed through us: but He has not cast us off. His presence and blessing are those of a forgiving God: they tell us at once of His faithfulness and forbearance, and of our unworthiness.

No gratitude which we can feel can meet His claim. But as we have dishonoured Him, we do our utmost now to give Him glory. We count up all we owe; we think of all He is and has been; we know He is the same for ever; we thank Him, and we call on those who share our blessings to join their praises with ours. The name of God means more to us than it did to those to whom God was not made known in Christ, and made present by the power of the Holy Spirit. We are ever being met and helped by the God who dwells among us, and who by His Spirit makes us His temple. He claims us as His own, and His love would keep us: we show our thankful love by claiming Him as our God, and by clinging to Him with earnest heart and thoughtful mind.

All are dependent on God for each good and joy of life; our glory is to know and to acknowledge it. We do not hide, as if in shame, the tokens of God's love which we enjoy. We speak of them that we may rouse our own hearts to warmer gratitude. We show our value for them by seeking yet more of God's best gifts. We praise God by using His mercies for our own growth in holiness and for the world's good. Gratitude is God's right, and it is happiness to offer it. We find new blessing as we draw near with our thanksgiving. As we give witness in word, we gain grace to be in ourselves and in our lives proofs of what God can do.

"O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good: for His mercy endureth for ever."—PS. cvii. 1.

JEHOVAH is good. He is the good One. To his goodness nothing can be added. It never grows less, however largely it goes forth in blessing. God, in the perfect fulness of His being, is the source of all good for those whom He has made. Men miss their true good. Eve lost the joy which God gave her in a nature that was very good, and in a state where all good was prepared; for she let the thought enter and have place in her mind that God withheld good, and that the way of His will was not the best. So Israel, time after time, turned aside in foolish distrust of God, and sought good in false self-chosen ways.

And all our loss and failure is due to the same cause. We take what comes to us of good: we use and enjoy it, but think not of Him of whose goodness it is the token. We trust our own blind desires. We hear the promises of tempters who ever try to draw us off from God. Then in our sorrow we think that God has dealt hardly with us, forgetting that all is but proof that we have forsaken God, and so turned His goodness away. We need to be always drawing near with fresh faith and desire. We need to remind ourselves that God is good, and to find out more and more the worth of that which we never can find out in full.

We are not as those who have never sinned, who can be glad in the light of God's goodness, feeling no shame. Like Israel we have to think much of God's goodness as it takes the form of mercy. We need the goodness that spares, that follows, that restores, that cleanses. God pleads with us not to receive His grace in vain. The Cross tells us of a goodness for which we never could have dared to hope. It is a pledge of mercy for ever; and that Sacrifice has a power which all the needs of all longing souls for all eternity can never exhaust. We bless God and praise Him, as we feel our need of mercy, and draw nigh to find how forbearing and forgiving and bounteous the mercy is. We praise Him that we are His, and that He is ours; that we are for Him, and that the treasures of His goodness are for us; that out of the fulness which is in Christ we can receive new cause and new power to thank God for ever.

"The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool. The Lord shall send the rod of Thy strength out of Zion."—Ps. cx. 1, 2.

DAVID called the Son of David Lord. He saw the day of Christ's triumph and was glad. What David spake before, the Gospel declares. Christ has mounted to the height of glory, to which the will of Jehovah called Him, as the end of His obedient suffering. No longer does He toil for men as a lowly dying man; as the Almighty God he makes His power felt. He is a King for ever, though not yet is He a King out of whose realm all unbelief and disobedience have been driven.

Still He suffers in His faithful ones, and He pleads for them in their need and weakness. So shall it be until all things are put under His feet, and His mediatorial work for His struggling Church is finished. Meanwhile the rod of His strength has gone forth from Zion. The apostles received power, when the Holy Ghost came upon them, and they bore forth from Jerusalem the word of the Gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation, able to cast down strongholds and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God. Where the foe was strongest there the rod of Christ's triumph and authority was held up; there His rod and staff were the guide and consolation of His faithful. His foes shall see His glory, though they shall not share it. Those whom the power of His love does not master, shall yield to the strength of His judgments.

What glory for us that One in our nature is so high; that as He humbled Himself for us, so He is where He is for us men and for our salvation. More than this; if we are in Christ, His glory is ours now. In Him we are raised, and are "made to sit together in heavenly places." The perfect peace that follows final victory is not yet ours. We do not yet see all things put under our Lord. But we are sure that His Church must prove stronger than all foes. Heaven and earth and the under-world shall bow before Him to whom all power is given. And all the foes of Christ which rise up within us shall be cast down and bruised under His feet shortly. We have a war to wage, but it is as conquerors that we fight. We do not fear to wait with Him, and to fight for Him; we look to reign with Him.

"I love the Lord, because He hath heard my voice and my supplications."—PS. CXVI. 1.

THE love of God is the source of all love in man. We love Him and we love one another, because He has first loved us. It is His love that gives us the instinct of prayer, and awakens in us the hope that He will not fail us. We find the love that has drawn us nigh meet us with a sure answer, full of new help to faith and hope. God does not act with caprice, but always from the perfection of His unchanging nature. He is Love; and so He calls us to seek Him in prayer. The Divine ear is ever open to those whom the Divine love waits to bless.

God has inclined His ear, coming down in Christ to where we are in our lowliness and want. Where Christ's people are, there is Christ. In Him we find acceptance and are near to God. The Spirit prays in us according to the will of God, who thus helps us when we know not what to pray for as we ought. The Incarnation and those fruits of it which follow from the coming of the Holy Ghost assure us of an abiding nearness to God. We love the Lord, who hears us, and to whom we make known all that is in our hearts. He has saved us from many a loss. He has cheered us in many a grief. He has brought us unharmed through dangers. We love Him for what His mercies have shown us that He always is.

His goodness leads us to repentance, and we draw near to Him. As Christ by words of love and works of healing led men to seek from Him help for their souls, so our trials and the prayers which they move us to pray bring us before our God. We learn in His holy presence that there are worse ills than those which wear the bodily strength, that there are sorer pains than those which worldly loss and trouble cause. We learn how Christ has sought and saved us. He has heard our voice, and we know by the love which He gives us for Him that He is saving us. We may feel as if our love were cold and unworthy; but we can test it by the work it does. We show our love for Him who hears our prayers by the faith which trusts Him and prays on. The life which quickens our souls will show itself in active and loving work for Him, in the strength of the grace with which His love ever meets the continual claim of our faith.

"Teach me, O Lord, the way of Thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end."—Ps. cxix. 33.

THERE is one safe way. It is narrow, hard to find, and hard to keep. Many broad and pleasant paths seem to lead towards the same end. Crowds choose them and tempt us to follow. We need to be led step by step, and to watch lest we stray. God has not left us without waymarks and light. His will is made known. His commandments warn us where we must not trespass, and teach us how we ought to walk so as to please Him.

Each of us has his own race set before him. Each has his own difficulties, his own duties, making up his life's work. Each has his own forms of weakness or of outward drawback and hindrance. New and strange questions come to each, when duties clash. So the commandments of God have not the same meaning always to those who are not the same, and have not the same work to do or the same path to tread. We look past the law to the Law-giver, and we feel that we are guided not by a dead set of rules, but by the will of a living Being. We look for the inward light which makes the statutes of God a sure rule in all life's windings and dangers. Christ in us is wisdom and righteousness. So long as we honestly ask what God would have us do, willing to do it, the guiding voice and helping hand shall not fail us.

It is well for us to feel how slowly we go on; and we need to be kept humble by finding how hard it is to know what is right or best. We often have to be turned back from a wrong path, where our weakness or some subtle temptation has led us. We often have to retrace our steps, or to hasten to make up ground lost in times of doubt or sloth. God teaches us that for all our life there is a course marked, and that each day's duty is a part of that. He would have us study what is told us of His will, and learn how each commandment bears upon the details of our own daily duty. He would have us mark the steps of Him who has shown us a pattern life in which God's will was fully done. He would have us hear ever the call of Christ, and seek to plant our footsteps where Christ has planted His. So shall we endure unto the end, and we shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

"*Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.*"—PS. cxix. 105.

GOD is light; and He alone can say, "Let there be light" where the darkness of sin and falsehood is. God has made Himself known, shining forth in truth and holiness. Christ has come a Light into the world. God has spoken by His Son. Through Him we can know God more clearly, and our duty is made more plain. When we are in darkness, we know not whither we are going: dangers are all around us; but we fall into them blindly. We err from the safe path, and we know it not. God's light shows the way and how narrow it is. Each difficulty is set before us; no snare or pitfall is hidden; no fair-looking temptation is left unexposed. And the same light enables us to see how to surmount the difficulties and to pass on unharmed.

It is not enough to be shown the way of life. Even in the narrow way there is danger. For we may stumble in it, or fall back, or turn aside and miss the end we seek. We all have perils of our own, that make our way narrow, and special times when we must step with watchful care. The Holy Spirit is with us, to help us to use in our own case the teaching which He has inspired, and to show us how to plant our feet in the footprints of our Lord. If we seek, with a true heart and obedient will, to have the inward light enabling us to profit by that which shines upon us from above, the help of God will not fail us. If we use the best means in our reach to learn what God would have us do, we shall be made wise unto salvation.

That light of God, moreover, not only shows but cheers the way. It makes the heart brave, and the hope glad. It assures of the care and the goodwill of Him towards whose Presence we are called to move. And it tells us not of rest yet, not of the end reached, but of a path stretching before us, along which our feet must press on. The Word of God speaks directly and personally to each one. Always there is an answer to the questions—What is the teaching which I am meant to gather from this? What counsel or comfort does it bear to me? How can I in my every-day life of duty and trial act upon these lessons of love and wisdom? How does this part of my Lord's example, or this act of His life, set for me a pattern, that I may walk in His steps?

"Deliver my soul, O Lord, from lying lips, and from a deceitful tongue."—Ps. cxx. 2.

THE tongue is set on fire of hell, and does much of the work of the evil one in making this world a place of torment. Whom has it not burned? Whom does it not try and prove? Who has not need to fear lest his own tongue make him fall? It is hard to be charged with wrong-doing of which we are guiltless. It is hard to be defamed by those for whom we have felt only good-will, and to find that those whom we have trusted have deceived us with fair false words. But we may have the comfort of knowing that we are true, and that we suffer not as evil-doers, but even as our Lord did. We cannot help being made to suffer, but we need not sin. Our prayer must be that our love and truth fail not, and that the trial may make us more firm in faith.

God hears what is said against us, and God hears us when we spread it all before Him. He will deliver us from the temptation to haste and anger and revenge. He will enable us to have the peace of a good conscience and of sure trust in Him. There are other dangers from the lying lips and the deceitful tongue of those who would draw us away from God. As Eve lost her happy faith and innocence, so may we, unless we are on our guard and seek God's help. We cannot shut our ears to the many loud voices that proclaim false doctrine boldly, that question the ways of God, that throw doubt upon the worth of means of grace, and dispute about God's laws as if they were not binding. Where there is not a bold setting aside of God, there is often a cunning art shown in taking all the life and meaning and power from what God has said.

It is hard at times to meet the boasts of the unbelieving, and to see through the plausible pretences of those who make the Word of God of none effect. We are apt to lose heart when we think of all that must be faced, and of our own weakness. We are in danger of thinking that what we cannot answer is therefore strong. So we may fall from faith and from obedience. But God is on the side of our soul, and against all that is against His truth. He will deliver us when we cry to Him. He will keep us so that our tongue may be pure from evil and our lips may speak no guile.

"*A place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob.*"—PS. cxxxii. 5.

THE psalm pleads with God to remember the zeal of David and the covenant-promise made to him. David mourned when the ark was lost. When it was heard of in the pasture land round Bethlehem, and found at Kirjath-jearim the city of woods, he longed to find for it a worthy resting-place. He could not rest in his house of cedar, or enjoy the good which God had given him, till all he could do was done to give the ark of God a home. It was not for him, but for his son Solomon the peaceable, to build the temple. But He could make ready; and meanwhile he guarded the ark with reverent care.

Happy indeed are those, whose privilege it is to find what has been lost, that tells of God and helps communion with Him! Happy they who bring forth forgotten truths, and set up on high in their rightful place of honour the sacraments and means of grace in which God meets His people! Nothing in the place where we ask God to meet us, nothing in the manner of our drawing nigh to Him, must seem to show a want of loving zeal or of holy fear. God dwells in the highest, and no earthly resting-place is worthy of Him; but He gives us ways of expressing our heart's reverence, and He blesses us when we do our best.

The true habitation for the mighty God is in His people. Such a dwelling-place did Christ, the Son of David, seek for Him when He came to earth. How great were His zeal and sorrow while He laboured to restore to men their forgotten God! How great is still the devotion with which through the Holy Spirit He gathers and prepares the living stones, of which the everlasting temple of the Most High is being reared!

Each of us is claimed as a temple of the Holy Ghost. God asks to dwell in our nature, and to make it a home in which all tells of His hallowing presence. He knocks to be let in. He warns if His house has in any way become a mere home of worldliness or a den of thieves. We show our sense of the high honour that is ours by taking care that nothing in us offends Him; we show our zeal by helping as we can with work and prayer to build that spiritual temple which shall stand for ever to His praise.

"*O Lord, Thou hast searched me, and known me.*"—PS. CXXXIX. 1.

WE live before One from whom nothing can be hid. Everything appears to Him in its true full worth and meaning. We were in God's thought before we began to be. He has traced our growth and our way, from the first. He sees in what direction we are moving, and foresees whither we tend. He knows all the ways by which we have become what we are. He understands where we are weak, and why; the wants we feel, the griefs that wear and vex, the hopes that cheer. He knows what we long for, and where we lean towards good or evil, and the motives that have strongest power to move our wills. We are before Him in our lonely hours, when our thoughts and feelings rise and go, and leave their mark upon us. He is with us when we take our place in the busy work of life; when we go in the straight path of duty, and when we wander.

Though we forget Him, we do not hide; though we turn from Him and shake off His guiding hand, we do not pass from under His gaze. Before our thoughts have taken shape in our minds they are clear to Him; for He sees their source. We may mistake ourselves; but our words and deeds are all weighed and judged in their true worth by Him with whom we have to do. It is not that God turns towards us at times. His knowledge of us is part of the knowledge of Him who knows all things always and perfectly.

No one denies this truth; but it is well to state it to ourselves, and it is well to come before God and say to Him that we remember it. We are known to God, as all His creatures are; but we are higher than other creatures, in that we are aware of God's interest in us. We are above other men, according as we feel our dignity, and act in the consciousness of it. We are touched by the love that in a fellow-creature cares for our well-being and well-doing. The presence of one whom we honour keeps us watchful over word and deed and manner. The thought of God's following, searching eye should indeed be a strong motive to a pure and noble life. And what comfort and hope we can find in the thought that God knew what we would be when He sent His Son to live and die for our salvation, and that with the same unchanging love He bends over us now!

"Blessed be the Lord my strength, which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight."—Ps. cxliv. 1.

DAVID praised God when he went forth to war, and when the fight was won. God is always the cheer and hope of His people in what they plan and begin. At His feet they lay the glory, with glad and thankful hearts, when all is happily and well done. In the Name of the Lord Jesus, and for the glory of God whatsoever we do is done, if it is done aright. Apart from Him through whom we can do all things, we can do nothing. "Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" may be and should be always our song of hope and thankfulness.

From Him we learn wisdom to use aright what our faith grasps of His Divine strength. He comes near in all forms and ways of goodness, meeting with no stint our every want and care. He shuts us in and hides us as in a fortress where our foes cannot reach us. To Him we may rise far above where the hosts of evil come, so that we can look down calmly as from a high tower, and can feel ourselves safe from harm in a pure air. He delivers us when we cry to Him, if we are hard beset, or if we have lost ground through our own weakness or want of skill, and our heart is ready to fail. He puts Himself as a shield between us and the force that we fear. He covers our soul's life with Himself, enabling us to hold up the shield of faith to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. He strengthens us to subdue under us and make subject to the rule of the Spirit all the powers of our nature, so that each may move in its due order, and the Kingdom of God within us may be at peace.

Blessed be God who does so great things for us; by whose will Christ is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption! Blessed are we who can thus do all things through the Divine power, with which we are made one! Blessed are we if, knowing this, we act in the assurance of it, and living in the faith and fear and love of God, fear not what man or any power of evil can do against us! If we learn from Him who teaches us war, if our hands grasp what God gives, and if with our fingers we use the spiritual skill which will make God's strength in us tell, we shall be more than conquerors.

"Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God."—Ps. cxlvi. 5.

HOPE in man fails; for man must die. Our time here soon ends, and we pass to another state of being out of reach of all that earth can give. We need One as our hope and help, who lives for ever, and from whom our own death does not cut us off. We need One whose thoughts of good-will towards us do not change, and whose plans for our well-being nothing can thwart. We are not proved happy, though the world's mightiest smile on us, and pour out their gifts freely. We are not wretched, though all the world be against us, or though it scorn us too much to think us worth hating. God alone can make us happy. The want of Him can alone spoil our blessedness.

The God of Jacob is eternal, and is the same for ever. He keeps His covenant now, as He did with the patriarch who asked help for his need and vowed to have the Lord always for his God. We see greater things than Jacob saw when heaven opened before him. To our faith God is revealed in Christ, and we know of our part in Him by the passing of our prayers and of His gifts through the one Mediator who joins heaven and earth. We can prevail with God, as members of Him whom His love gave to call us to Himself. He whom we trust as our God will be with us and will keep us in the way that we go; He will give us all things needful, and nourish us with the Bread of Life, and clothe us with the raiment of righteousness, till we come to our Father's house in peace.

Happy are we if our hope is in the Everlasting and Almighty! Happy are we if we come to the wells of grace that God has opened! He has made the world where we are now, and the world whither we hope to go. In heaven and earth He is Lord, and is ready to show Himself our God. His covenant is not for the short time of life on earth, but for ever. His promise is not all fulfilled when we have found Him true in the trials and cares of our pilgrimage. Happy are those who trust Him when, in the hour of death, His help upholds and hope can look forward to eternal good. Happy are those who find in heaven what Divine help has done for them, and who hope in a God who will lead them ever on to higher bliss and glory.

"*He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water.*"
Ps. i. 3.

FROM God we have our being, and those things by means of which our souls live. He has made us so that, by the right use of what He provides, we may grow and bear fruit for our good and His praise. He plants us where the streams of His manifold grace are ever flowing freshly. Those living waters do not run dry or fail; for their source is the love of the Infinite and Eternal.

We need not wither or be unfruitful, or bear only what is wild and useless. Athirst for God, we can receive more and more fully from the springs of grace, and strike our roots more deeply, so that the vigour of our hidden life may show itself in a fairer growth upward. We can grow freely, according to the law of the new nature, which is from God and is nourished and developed by Him. We can stretch forth true heavenward desires and aims, like the leaves and branches of a healthy tree, to catch the dew and light of blessing from above. No heat or storm of trial need harm us or check our fruitfulness; for Divine refreshment is ours, and we are planted firmly by our God. Trial need only make us draw more largely on the supplies of grace, and take heed that the roots of our spiritual nature are well cared for. So when the Lord comes, in due season, seeking fruit, we shall be ready, and our promise shall not fail. God makes all things help the true prosperity of those who own His rights, and trust His goodness, and are willing to be blessed by Him in all ways, by whatever means He wills. Even our failures serve to warn us where we need the wise care and tending of the Divine Husbandman.

There is a sure blessing, even now, on all we do with honest aim and thankful trust in God. Part of the joy of that blessing is in the hope it gives. We are nourished and trained and pruned now in this state of grace, that in the due season we may be found fit to be planted in the place of glory. Well may we praise God for the pledge and earnest we are given of a fruitfulness and blessedness to be reached in full in the land of light and love. We look forward to the time when we shall be indeed good trees, bearing good fruit, where all things are good.

"Thou hast maintained my right and my cause; Thou satest in the throne judging right."—Ps. ix. 4.

THE Lord's throne is a throne of justice. It is firm for ever. Before it each cause comes. There is clear full light all around it. None can hide wrong, or make it look like right; none can make good seem evil, or bring truth to shame. On the throne the Most High always has His place, with the calmness of One whose knowledge none can question, whose wisdom none can blind or deceive, whose power none can resist.

Happy are we, if we have once for all and with no reserve put ourselves into the hands of Christ, vowed to be one with Him in will and aim, making His cause ours, that so our cause may be His. Then may we be at peace, and have boldness in the continual judgment which now prepares for the great day. The world may in ignorance or in wilful unfairness condemn us, and cast out our name as evil, and wrong us in many ways; but the world cannot move the firm throne of the Most High or snatch us from His care. To His court, as citizens of heaven, we appeal. Our cause may seem lost, but it surely must win, if God sees that right is on our side. God has yielded none of His authority to those who have set themselves against Him and His people. He has not let go His hold on men. He has not been a careless, or helpless, or inactive looker-on, while right and wrong have been at war. Faith is quietly sure that all has been, and is, well. The more our soul's foes have boasted, the more humbly thankful we are that He who judgeth right has guarded our right and upheld our cause.

Trial ought to be no temptation to doubt God; it should only make us careful to see that we hold fast to Him who never fails. Christ, when on His way to die under a wrongful sentence, could thank His Father for hearing Him always, and know that He was even already glorified. So may it be with us, if we bear our cross after Him, and abide in union with Him. We may be always confident that, however cast down, we are not destroyed; that though persecuted, we are not forsaken; that though humbled before men and a mark for the world's scorn, we have in our God an almighty champion, and are being glorified in the sight of Heaven.

"*The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance.*"—Ps. xvi. 5.

As members of Christ we can make these words our own. They are His words on behalf of those who are holy from their calling as children of God. All the treasures of Divine goodness laid up in the kingdom of God are for the use and joy of His heirs. What promise can God's rivals give to tempt us away from Him whose words of promise are so large, and are always true? What do we need beyond what the Infinitely Great and Kind presses on us? He is the one source of all good in everything.

His care for us is shown in the good gifts which cheer our daily life, and in that spiritual good which is in us a power to grow in goodness. What we are and have can add nothing to the glory of the Infinite. He wills in His free love to pour out on us bounties of providence and grace, to care for us as His creatures, and to bless us as sharers in the treasures of His kingdom. We can offer Him nothing which has not come from Him. We are honoured by His glory being shown in us. If we turn from Him, we suffer loss: we cannot lessen His glory by refusing or neglecting to profit by His goodness.

The Lord is ours: He has made Himself our portion. As His children in Christ, we are heirs of all things, and joint heirs with Christ. If the Source of all good thus gives us Himself, we are rich indeed. We rejoice not only in salvation, but in God our Saviour. As we grow in knowledge we shall find out more the worth of the treasures upon which we can draw. We do not rest even in the best gifts which we now enjoy. They tell of the love of the Giver, and enlarge our hope in Him. From the Lord Himself we gain strength and refreshment in our pilgrimage. When we are tired and faint, and all cheer that is not from Him only leaves us lower, we come with glad thankfulness to Him who never fails. God gives us a claim on Him; let us be careful to own His claim on us by faithfulness in heart and life. So we can go forward with lowly but thankful faith and hope to that last time when the salvation that is in Him shall be revealed in its full glory, and we shall know what we possess in possessing God.

"*There is nothing hid from the heat thereof.*"—Ps. xix. 6.

WE do not feel the influences of the far-off stars as we do those of our own sun. Many of them are greater and more splendid, but not to us. The sun seems to figure God; declaring, more than all the rest of creation, His glory and power to bless. We cannot gaze upon his brightness, except through some medium that softens the flashing of his burning rays. But for him, darkness and death would reign in cold gloomy horror over the world. He is the means by which God gives us the light and warmth which quicken life and make earth glad and fair.

Though so far above us, there goes forth from him an influence which makes him as if present everywhere, pervading all things. Even in the depths of the ice there is warmth. The heat that flames from him is in every movement, in all that lives, and in all that works in Nature.

We see in the sun a plain type of Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, in whom is life, and who is the light of men. The Word, who is the shining forth of the Father's glory, has tabernacled among us, taking flesh from a human mother that He might dwell with us in our nature. He has come forth, seeking union with His Church, making her as His bride the sharer of His glory, giving her from Himself light to shed abroad through the world.

There were giants in old time, the offspring of the sons of God and the daughters of men. Christ is the giant, the mighty One, who in His twofold nature runs with joyful willingness the course which the will of His Father has set before Him. He declares the glory of God in the manifestation of the Divine love. He shows the work of God in the perfecting of those who shine as lights in the world, and shall shine as the stars for ever and ever. There is nothing hid from the searching virtue that goes forth from Him. He lighteth every man that cometh into the world. Some rejoice in clearer day; some feel burn within them a purer glow of heavenly life and love. But whatever there is in man, enlightening his mind and kindling a warmth of spiritual life in his heart, comes from Christ. Like the sun in Nature He uses the things of earth to reflect and conduct that which has its only source in Him.

"Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in His holy place?"—Ps. xxiv. 3.

THE Lord has placed us in His world, and given us all things in it richly to enjoy. But we are here, to be led upward to a higher state. Sinless Adam had on earth a rest, beyond which he did not look. Now we know of and hope for better things than he enjoyed. The good and beauty of earth, even though marred by sin, lift our hearts towards the glory of heaven. The hill of the Lord rises above the earth; it leads to the holy place on the heights where the very Presence of the Lord is manifested. We can climb that hill. God is with us to guide us upward till we are where we can abide with Him for ever.

Only by ascending can we gain the height. The place where we hope to be is holy. The hill is the Lord's; none can ascend it but in the strength of the Holy One. Men could go up to the temple on Mount Zion and speak words of worship and bring rich gifts in vain. So now all our words and doings may be no true part of a heavenward walk with God. The pure will and motive of the heart must rule the outward life, if the character is to be raised; and the character is the man.

We are called to ascend from our natural state to the heights for which grace enables; to break free from the dragging power of earthly things, and from bondage to the creatures, yielding to the attraction and influence of things above. Each evil habit we shake loose from is a weight gone, which leaves us free to rise. Each grasp of faith and hope, as they reach towards things on high, lays hold on that which draws us upward. Each effort to cling in closer devotion to our Guide, each earnest use of means of grace, brings us new power to ascend, and gives us a nearer prospect of the holy place.

This is not our rest, because it is polluted; we cannot rest, for we are not yet holy. We thank God that He who calls us to His Presence calls us also to fitness for it, and warns us how alone our souls can gain what He bids us seek. We thank Him that He shows us how far we are still below the state of those who see Him as He is. We rejoice in hope, if we are being led up the hill of the Lord by Him who knows how hard the climb is. Seeking for purity in heart and life we press on towards the holy place which He prepares.

"Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of His, and give thanks for a remembrance of His holiness."—Ps. xxx. 4.

WE are called to be saints. The name tells what we ought to be and may become. The holiness of Him with whom we have to do makes this claim on us and gives hope. In the words, "Be ye holy, for I am holy," we learn what must be our aim, and how to reach it. He is holy, and so it is His will to make us holy. From Him comes the holiness by which we grow to be saints indeed, as well as in name and calling.

God's holiness is for us whom He has made His children. Members of Christ, we have a part in all that wealth of Divine holiness which is stored in Christ. We may be glad, sure that we are safe, so long as with honest will we commit the keeping of our souls in well-doing to the Holy One. More than this, God has opened a way by means of which His holiness may pass into our natures, making them like His own. We adore Him, and as we find out more of what He is, we gain a deeper joy that our God is so glorious in holiness. We praise Him that we are made one with the God-man, and that of His fulness we receive. We praise Him that the Holy Spirit gives us the desire for holiness and the power to gain it, and that He provides in means of grace channels by which it may come to us from God.

When we think of God's Name, it brings before us what He has in His Word and His works made Himself known to be. In that Name is summed up all the story of His dealings with His people. His Name is, as He said to Moses, His "memorial for ever." The "remembrance" of what He has been to them—His love, His truth, His patience, His bounty—all help us to know the Holy One. They show what Jehovah is in His manifold perfection. We glorify that Name which tells us what we can always find our God to be, and is a promise of what we through His grace may become. While we sing to Him our songs of praise, we join in heart with those on high who bow before the throne, saying, "Holy, holy, holy!" We lift up hands cleansed from sin and active in holy works. We thank Him in whom we hope, by so using His grace that we may become what He wills, showing the holiness of those who are trained in the service of the Holy One.

"*Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation.*"—Ps. xxxv. 3.

CHRIST gave His Spirit into His Father's hands at last, with the same trust that had upheld Him in all His mortal life. In the cry "Why hast Thou forsaken Me?" He prayed that the comforting signs of His Father's care might be restored. He went willingly to death, like Isaac, sure that God would raise Him, and that from Him should spring the promised race.

He is our Mediator, through whom we know God as our salvation. In His Name we pray: one with Him we look up to God, and know that the throne of glory is a throne of grace. "In all time of our tribulation, in all time of our wealth, in the hour of death, and in the day of judgment" we need God, and He alone can keep us in safety. Other helpers fail and betray. We turn from these, when we turn towards Him. We put away their vain promises, when we claim His. Our love stretches up towards Him, as we speak to Him in words of faith and hope and dependence, pleading for an answer of grace. He is the salvation of each soul that will hear His Spirit's voice, and welcome the power, to the going forth of which that voice is witness.

When we pray God to declare Himself our salvation, we ask Him to make known what He is, by what He does for our soul. He speaks, and it is done: His words are works. We can go on in faith, though He seem to leave us unhelped in darkness. We can still be sure that we are being saved in the way which He knows best and safest. But we are not wrong to pray that, if it be His will, we may hear in our souls the voice that breathes upon us the gifts of salvation, and trace the signs of the care with which He keeps and blesses us. While our souls say unto Him "Thou art my salvation," all things work together for good. Even what seems God's silence helps on our salvation by the power of His overruling will. As we are saved more from the evil that hides God, we shall have more of the witness of the Spirit telling us what God is doing, and shall be more content and thankful in a lowly life of faith. The prayer "Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation" shall not be answered in full till we see God, and His words "Well done, good and faithful" tell us that the work of His grace is finished.

"*I was as a man that heareth not, and in whose mouth are no reproofs.*"—Ps. xxxviii. 14.

CHRIST was led as a lamb to the slaughter. He felt keenly all pain of body and of spirit. But He was as if He heard not, and had no answer. He did not upbraid those who wronged Him, nor did He plead with them. He had taken on Him a world's sin. He had come to do and to bear His Father's will. He would not murmur at the fulness of the cup given to Him, or at the way in which it was mixed. He knew that men could have no power at all against Him, except it were given them of His Father. To Him He looked. To His voice He listened as it told of the great joy to which the path of patient obedience led. To Him He lifted up His heart as to One who heard Him always. No threats could tempt Him to come down from the quiet rest that faith gave Him, to take nervously or hastily His own part.

We "consider Him who endured such contradiction of sinners"—who He was, what He bore, from whom and for whom. Our sorrows warn us of sins that are our own shame. If things are laid to our charge that we know not of, yet there is much that we alone are aware of, and yet more that is hidden even from ourselves, and only plain to God. We dare not struggle to put from us the cup of suffering, which may be indeed for us the cup of salvation.

There are times when silence is unfaithfulness; there are more times when to speak is unbelief. To please God is our aim, not to please men or to assert ourselves. If God knows us true, we can bear that men should judge us false. We need not fear that He will fail us, while we suffer for Him, or will let the work we do for Him be harmed. What are men to us, if the Almighty stand by us as a pledged friend? What are the struggles of time, if through them we pass on to endless peace? What is our weakness, if we are upheld by Divine power? Why should the pain of our spirit's wounds tempt us to leave the shelter of God's peace, and seek the shelter of our own rash words of self-defence, as if God would not take our part, or were slow to do it? Strong in faith we can be quiet; only hearing reproofs that we may warn ourselves to be true; speaking no reproaches, but laying all our care before Him in whom is all our hope.

"*Thy right hand, and Thine arm, and the light of Thy countenance, because Thou hadst a favour unto them.*" Ps. xliv. 3.

WHAT God gives is a pledge of further blessing and a means of gaining it. God chose Israel, and called them to high work among the nations. They knew their weakness and the might of those whom they overcame. God's free will called them. His favour went with them. Their sword won victory for Him who gave it force. Their arm wrought salvation, to the glory of Him by whose strength alone all was done.

We praise God for all that He did for His Church of old. This was part of a scheme, the full blessings of which we enjoy. The arm of the Lord has been revealed. His right hand has been stretched out to gain for us a place in the kingdom over which He rules. The good things ready for us are not rewards which we have earned or won. They tell of grace giving unasked-for blessing, as the sun sheds down light and warmth. They tell of God's arm put forth in the Incarnation, breaking with its might the power of evil, gaining for us the freedom of children of God, and providing all that our souls need. Our union with the Almighty by the new birth of the Spirit was before our power to will and choose, so that for our share in the portion of God's people we must thank God wholly. In all the means by which that union is kept up and strengthened, and our souls grow, it is made plain that God does all, as He wills, in ways that warn down pride. We are not ashamed to be always dependent on the God of Nature and Grace. We rejoice to inherit what He enabled our fathers to win and to hand down. We rejoice to have a common cause with Him who sways all things.

We have been brought out of Egypt, and the arm that saved us will not weary till it makes us safe. But we are still in the Church in the wilderness, and we must go by the way of faith and obedience to the rest and plenty of the Promised Land. He who has called us will not fail us in our pilgrimage. We can ask for daily bread from heaven, and drink freely of the water from the spiritual Rock. We can look towards the countenance which shines even behind cloud. We can advance upon our spiritual foes, strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

"*Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most High.*"—Ps. l. 14.

HOW shall we meet God's claim? How shall we bring Him what we owe? What does He ask from us, as our God whose word of promise is our one hope? We cannot disown our vows; we would not if we could: that were to throw away our covenant with God. Our baptism binds us to duty, if we are to keep our part in our Father's kingdom. When we renewed our vows and sought new strength to keep them, the bond between God and us was made more firm. Each call of faith and prayer was an acknowledgment of duty to our God, and a vow to be true.

There were in the old Church outward rites and acts of worship, by which God taught men to show their faith and obedience. Neglecting these, men lost their rights in the God of Israel, who chose to be drawn near to in these ways. Yet God valued not these outward things, but the hearts of those who came to Him by means of them.

God is the same now that He ever was. He would have reproved the Jews for any failure in doing what His law laid down: but as He had a spiritual aim in each rule He gave, so He looked for a spiritual purpose in those who outwardly obeyed. He has no need of any gifts we bring Him, or of any work we do for Him. For our sake, not for His, He bids us vow and pay. He calls us to Him in thanksgiving, that we may gain new gifts for which to thank Him more. We must praise God in word and deed, else we surely fail in heart: but it is to the heart that God looks.

This is our great joy and glory, that God thus draws us near. He bids us come, with our spirits, to Him as a Spirit, and hold close communion with Him. He cares for how we feel towards Him, and for our care for His love to us. All our life may and should be praise. If we offer God thanksgiving aright, we leave no vow unpaid. We show forth God's praise with joyful lips that God opens by His Spirit. We glorify God in our body, giving up ourselves to His service. And in union with Christ's offering of Himself, we bring our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. We seek for Christ to dwell in us, that our whole life may be vowed to God.

"*In God I will praise His word, in God I have put my trust I will not fear what flesh can do unto me.*"—Ps. lvi. 4.

IT is no vain vaunting to boast in God. The more lowly we are, the less we lean upon the help of man, the more sure may be our trust in God. We meet the challenge of our spiritual foes by praising Him in whose Name we fight. We cheer our own hearts by telling over what God has done. We own before men how strong and true He is. Shame on us if we fail to glory in Him who is our strength and hope, as loudly as the world boasts in a hope that will prove vain.

God has spoken. His word has gone forth and come to us. He has made known what is in His mind and heart. In many forms, from time to time, God has thus declared Himself. He has spoken to us by His Son, and the Spirit speaks now with the still small voice that breathes from where the Presence of God is. God speaks and it is done. He does not recall what He has said, or change from what He has shown Himself to be. We have taken His word as a true revelation of what God is, of what God does, and of what God will do, in dealing with us. We have taken this for granted, and thrown ourselves upon His truth. He will not be false to the faith which He has asked us to have.

We dare not recall the words in which we have made our boast of God and vowed to be faithful. We cannot take away any of the trust we have placed in God, as if we had tried Him and found Him wanting. Rather must we make large claim on Him, and so gain ever new cause to praise Him, as the power of His word is felt and His promises are made good. Whole-hearted on God's side, and sure that He is on ours, we are safe. His strength is made perfect in the very weakness which would tempt us to be afraid. The arm of flesh may strike us so as to give pain, but cannot harm us. It cannot reach the life that we have trusted to God's keeping and that is safe under His shield.

Though our flesh may rise up, lusting against our spirit and warring against the law by which the Spirit rules our higher being, we will not fear. Through the Spirit we are one with the life of God. We ever come to God in faith for the power we need. We firmly mortify the deeds of the body, praising God for His word of promise that we shall live.

"Trust in Him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before Him."—Ps. lxii. 8.

WHERE there is true faith there is always zeal for man's good and God's glory. As we trust in God, His love makes us loving. Others are in need like ours. We must bid them to share the good which we have found. We do this best when our "moderation" is known unto all men, so that it is plain that the "peace of God keeps our hearts and minds," and we wait in quiet on a God whom we know to be "at hand." Our "silence" from all words of doubt and carefulness will help to still the nervous unrest of those whom we point to the One Hope who will not fail.

Alas, that those whom God has made His people should need to be told that their God is true! Alas, that outside His Church there are so many of His creatures to whom He is a strange God, not feared, not loved, not trusted in, not even known! "How dwelleth the love of God" in us, if it does not move us to help our brethren who are thus in need of soul? Each who has found God ought to be a light, a voice, a hand, for those who have not. If He has proved our "defence, and rock, and refuge," He ought to be our "glory," whose "salvation" we make known abroad.

There are times when all else has proved vain, and the soul turns to God half in despair. And in His great mercy God often then proves what He is. But He asks a faith and hope not driven to Him in hours of fear and gloom, but resting on Him always with a steady abiding thoughtfulness. He asks us to meet the fatherly care and watchfulness that are our safeguard at all times, with a trust that is at no time withdrawn. And the trust He means is not a mere thought or feeling, but a true strong grasp on God, with a will which thought and feeling make earnest. We show this trust, when we live before Him as a real Being who is interested in us. He knows all our past and all we are, before our thoughts show us to ourselves. But we search out all that lies deepest in our hearts, and spread before Him our sins, our cares, our doubts, our temptations, our sorrows. We live willingly under His eye. We tell Him all, and let our requests be made known. Then we are still, looking to Him with the glad trust which is both prayer and praise.

"*Let the righteous be glad; let them rejoice before God: yea, let them exceedingly rejoice.*"—Ps. lxviii. 3.

THERE was great joy when Christ was born. Men of good-will saw only love in that presence of God on earth to fight and triumph over evil. And those who now are with Him in His war for truth and holiness look for and love His appearing. They know that when the kingdom comes in glory their hearts shall be made right in each desire, and their highest aims in seeking holiness shall be reached.

If the new nature which He has given us rise towards Him, holding up firmly against the downward drag of the still struggling old nature, we may be glad to think of Him as near, and love to draw nigh at each sign of His drawing nigh to us. There is joy in the knowledge of Him in whose Presence we live by faith. There are new forms of joy in the ways by which He makes known His saving power, giving new means of grace and pledges of final victory. Each fresh proof of the strength of evil in the world, in ourselves, and in the hosts of darkness, should make us more glad that the Almighty is our God who careth for us. He will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able, but will fit our burden to our strength and our strength to our burden, and will make all things work for our good.

God bids us share His war, making it ours, that so we may share the gladness of His triumph. We rejoice before Him as those who seek to prepare His way in our own souls and in the world. We sing praises as, one by one, all those things that lift themselves up against Him are cast down, and His path is made straight. We have not yet fought the good fight to the end; but while we watch and pray and strive onward, thankfulness for past mercies and for help given now must show itself in glad praise. God claims that we rejoice in Him before men, as a strong and true friend. Thus we call others to prepare a welcome for Him, and find for themselves what makes us glad. We dare not, and we ought not to wish to hide our joy. Faith can see a present God, whose might is for us, and who blesses us with His grace and goodness. Hope looks on to sure victory, and already grasps the gladness of it. Our love to Him is a proof that He loves us, and wills to triumph over evil so as to make us worthy of His love.

"*Thou art my hope, O Lord God: Thou art my trust from my youth.*"—Ps. lxxi. 5.

GOD taught Moses to plead for Israel by all that He had done for them. So Israel learned the prayer spoken in their behalf. They traced God's dealings through the nation's wilful childhood, and saw the promise of its maturity. They were reminded of their dependence, and roused to live so as to be worthy of God's high calling. And David knew himself God's creature and God's chosen servant. It seemed a small thing for God to guard the life that He had given. So often delivered, each new danger would only bring new help to faith and new cause for praise.

The Church looks back to her first beginning, when God the Son was made flesh. She thinks of the day when the Holy Spirit came to make men one body with the risen Lord. The perils through which she has been brought, the mercies that have never failed, warn down any rising doubt of Him who is her covenant-God still. When men mock her and wonder at what seems the folly of her faith, she knows what the world knows not. Through all the days her Lord cannot be false to His word. He saves and gifts her to work for His glory and to tell His praise. He will purify her by her trials, and strengthen her by her conflicts, and perfect her for Himself.

We need not fail in heart, if we are trying to be true to God. Scorn that we share with the Most High need not shame us. Hatred that would strike at the Almighty through us will not harm. God made us for good, not for evil. He is a faithful Creator and Preserver. He has proved His care by each breath we have drawn, by each help we have been given, by each danger that has passed harmlessly. He called us into union with Himself when He gave us the new life of the Spirit; and His grace has followed us as the constant going forth of His love. He wills to train our souls till we are grown to spiritual manhood. God gives the hope which holds fast to Him. We are saved by hope; Christ in us is the gift of God which assures of all things and is the hope of glory. Christ before us shows the way towards what we see not yet. Christ pleading for us makes our faltering prayers the voice of trust in One who knows us and is merciful. Christ waiting for us bids us hold fast to the anchor that is fixed within the veil.

"The earth and all the inhabiters thereof are dissolved: I bear up the pillars of it."—Ps. lxxv. 3.

THE earth is God's building, and so is the Church. The old creation and the new are alike His workmanship. He guides the course of Nature on the sure wise method that He fixed at first, and which still is best. From time to time He has come in upon the course of things, showing Himself a living overruling God. When the need for this has passed, all has been seen going on by the same laws as before. His providence oversees and rules men, so that out of the confusion that man makes, and seems to be lost in, comes a better order and a firmer peace.

His Church is no work of chance or of man's will. He who planned and built it has not left it. He set in their places the pillars that bear it up. He measured their strength, and made them equal to their burden. He keeps in right balance what rests upon them. We are in the midst of what seems confusion; we are parts of it. God looks on all with full knowledge of all that each has to do or to bear, and bends all towards the aim He has in view. Right must prevail; for God reigns. God has appointed a day when He shall be proved to have been the builder and upholder and Lord of all things. Then the Judge shall deal out justice. Then the rule of the Ruler shall be felt and acknowledged.

We are not daunted by the signs of weakness and decay in all things around. Our hearts do not fail when those who know not God lose courage. Faith is sure of what He has done, is doing, and will do. For His own wise ends He often gives faith long sore trial. He delays to speak or to make His power felt; but His voice will at the right time startle a world that forgets Him. We do not lose heart, though men seem to sport with the Most High, and to stand up against Him in stubborn pride and boasting. Faith can hear the calm voice of God above the storm, when those who judge from the outward look of things fail in fear. God is almighty and all-wise. The foolishness of men shall be proved folly, and the haughtiness of those who dare God shall be brought low. We seek in the faith of the wise to fix our thankful hope on God. So shall we at last share His glory, when He rises up to judgment and to help all the meek upon earth.

"*Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of Thy Name: and deliver us, and purge away our sins, for Thy Name's sake.*"—Ps. lxxix. 9.

GOD is Love, and His glory is in the manifestation of Himself. In sorrow and loss we are reminded of Him, and warned of our sins against Him. Israel looked back to what God had been as their Saviour, and knew that though they had changed, God was still the same. So we remember how our God has saved us. We have known His goodness in His daily care. But He spared not His own Son, He sent His Holy Spirit, He called us into a state of salvation. We look to Him, sure that He waits to glorify His Name by showing forth His saving love.

Our sorrows witness of sin which has withdrawn us from the light of God's favour. As we think of Him, the God of our salvation, our sins take darker form. We ask for healing and rest; but like the man sick of the palsy, the first word we long to hear is that which tells of restored relationship and of pardon. And this, we know, is a longing given us by Him who longs to save from the sin which is His foe, and whose grace is hindered only by our want of active will to be made holy. The cry for help is proof of the gift of faith, and of the blessedness which is the portion of those who hunger and thirst after righteousness. It lays hold on a promise. In the act of prayer for help we own our helplessness without God. But we also own that with Him we can do all things; and pledge ourselves to put forth the grace we ask Him to bestow.

Our past falls are due not to failure in God's help, but to our slowness in using it. We have been weak in fight and trial, not because God left us alone, but because we have gone our own way. Now we seek the God of our salvation. He can remove the weakness that old sins have caused, and the stain of past sin, and the bondage of habits of wilfulness. He can set us free to make known the might of His grace, and to glorify His Name. He can give the will and power to work with Him who works in us. Help is for those who are ready to use it. Blessed are we if with earnestness and humility we put forth the maimed strength left to us, trusting that God will make us pure and strong, and save us to the end.

"Preserve my soul; for I am holy: O Thou my God, save Thy servant that trusteth in Thee."—Ps. lxxxvi. 2.

CHRIST always lived a life of trust and prayer, commending His Spirit into His Father's hands. With Himself He put into the Divine care all who should be His members. He was holy: they, though sinners, were accepted in Him by union with whom men become holy. Now Christ pleads for those who are in Him. But moreover, He gives us the will to pray, and He prays in us. We must pray for ourselves in His Name.

We are in the midst of dangers. We have many interests, as living beings, which are ever being threatened. Some are of a higher kind than others, and have to do with more lasting things; but for all we do right to care. The true way to care for them is to cast our care on God, looking to Him as His servants. Our unworthiness does not make us outcasts. We trust in Him, and He will not disappoint the faith which He has inspired. We have failed to be true servants; but He will prove Himself a true God. We have not served Him as we ought; but He will save us for His own Name's sake. We are not holy in the sense of being perfect even in will. But we are holy, if we have not lost the union which grace gave us with the source of holiness. We were hallowed for holy uses, when God called us out of darkness and made us one with Him who is the Light and Life of men. We have dedicated ourselves to Him and to holiness in each act by which we owned our place in His Church. So we plead with God to keep from desecration that which has been devoted solemnly to Him.

We know that this is surely His will. We lay before Him the perils through which we must pass, and ask Him to preserve us that we may be saved from harm, and that what threatens ruin may bring us blessing. We trust Him to preserve us in the unseen dangers of which He knows, and to keep us as He knows best till our earthly trial ends. We trust Him for the will to give ourselves ever anew to His holy service. We thank Him humbly for what He has done. The earnest of the Spirit, which tells us of union with our divine Father, gives us glad hope that He will preserve us till we are holy, not only in name and calling, but in deed and in truth.

"*From everlasting to everlasting Thou art God.*"—Ps. xc. 2.

GOD is the great "I am." He knows no time; for all things are always present to Him. He knows no change; for He is always perfect. He owes His being to none; for He is before all things as their Creator. While He wills, they last; and when He wills, they make room for fresh works of His forming hand. Generation after generation look up to the same sun, and are watched over by the same God. When heaven and earth have passed away, God is the same.

And more is meant than that some being is, who may be called by the name of God. He is God in all the full power of that name. He makes Himself known as He wills, in those ways which to His wise love are best. He is One to be feared and loved and worshipped and obeyed. He draws nigh to those who draw nigh to Him, meeting their trust with grace that never fails. He is One under whose shelter the tired can find rest, the careworn peace, the troubled comfort, and the downcast hope. Wherever we are, or whatever we do, the All-wise, Almighty, All-good waits to make us feel that He is our God.

We look to Him whom our fathers knew. What we read of God in old time tells us what He is with whom we have to do. And we can trust those whom we leave on earth to Him whose goodness and truth we have ourselves proved. They shall have no new God to do with, but the God of their fathers. And we do not go out of His realm when we die; He is the Maker of the world that is to be our new home. In heaven and earth and in Paradise we are alike under His eye and hand. The God, to whom we pray now in our need, receives on high the praises of those who shall know no need any more for ever.

All that is against us here must end. We may well bear on in hope and patience, if God is our God and we are true to Him. Soon we shall leave behind us the last of our foes and sorrows. Then there is the eternal God, who will show His goodness without a cloud to those who have trusted in His goodness through the clouds that seemed to hide it. Christ in His life and sacrifice manifested in time what the love of God always is. He was God from everlasting in the eternal yesterday; and to-day and for ever He is the same.

"*Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto Him with psalms. For the Lord is a great God.*"—Ps. xcv. 2, 3.

IN one sense we cannot come nearer to God than we always are. Yet, in a true way, we can seek His face and draw nigh to Him. There is holy ground where we must step with care and awe. There are signs which warn of His presence, while they veil it. There are means of grace in which we can know that God in very deed meets with us. And when we turn our thoughts and lift up our hearts towards God, we find a special Presence before which our worship can be laid. There is a true and mysterious presence of God in Jesus Christ, made known in His Church in many ways. It is most near and full of blessedness in that Sacrament in which God gives His own life to His people and they offer the great "Sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving."

The Lord is great, high over all things, ruling what He has made. Whatever is false must yield and pass away before the majesty of His truth. Nature is His with all its grand movements and delicate machinery. He rules in the world of grace, giving and doing all things by the might which goes forth from Him. He claims as His peculiar possession the Church which He has prepared for Himself, that it may be as a well-watered land, fruitful to His glory. He is the God of all the earth, to whom all races of men must come and do homage.

That glory and power, which might seem to overwhelm with awe and to leave no room for any other feeling, call for our thankful praise. We do not flee from that Presence; we do not shrink as we feel it near. It attracts us, it gives a joy which we long that others may be with us in feeling and expressing. There is a greatness in knowing and drawing near to such a Presence. This great God has made us; and the Almighty will care for His own work. He has redeemed us; and the All-loving will guard those whom He has bought to be His children. He sanctifies us; and the All-holy will perfect us for Himself. Oh for a purer and more childlike heart to feel a guileless trustful joy in God! Oh to be more like those who, having known Him here by faith, see His face, and have the fruition of His glorious Godhead!

"*From heaven did the Lord behold the earth; to hear the groaning of the prisoner; to loose those that are appointed to death.*"—Ps. cii. 19, 20.

THOUGH in the height of heaven, God saw the woes of His people. He heard their cry when, far away from their home, they felt as if driven far from God. Those who held them in bondage were, like themselves, His subjects. Men change and die; but God's rule survives; and the prophet, knowing this, counts surely upon help. There is in his words a prophecy of Christ. We who are exiles from heaven can use them to express our own hope in the eternal God.

Who can tell the sorrows that beset the life of man! How many and galling are the chains of sin, which wound and shame, and keep back from high good aims! We show feeling of our sorrows in groanings which are often hardly prayer; death awes us as the mysterious sentence passed on to us by our fathers; we are helpless as we go on to it, and as we think of the second death which that pictures. God has looked down; in Christ He has come down; and God in Christ is touched with a feeling of all which makes sad or fearful the lot of any one. He seeks to make that which is like an infant's cry of pain a prayer lifted up to Him. He seeks to take into His own care the life of all the dying.

Christ does not always stop the work of sorrow; for that would often be to check its healing work, and to set free the powers of sin. But He hears, and He speaks in answer, and He tells souls of life, and He shows them, when death comes, that He has heard and has saved, and that their life is, like His, made everlasting. Christ proves that He cares for us by making our bonds feel galling and by rousing in us a longing to be free. There is no fetter too strong for His power to break off; there is no mark of chain or stripe which He cannot heal. We may take on us His light burden and easy yoke, refusing to obey other lords. We can shake off the bonds of falsehood and of old habits of evil thought and feeling. We can learn the truth which will make us free. We can follow Christ as S. Peter followed the angel out of the prison. We can be one with Christ, and abiding in Him can know that because He lives we live, and we shall live, even for ever and ever.

"Glory ye in His holy Name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord."—Ps. cv. 3.

THE world glories in its "good things" apart from God. There is no gratitude, no sense of responsibility, no looking for the Divine blessing. We are taught to see in whatever helps and brightens life a gift of our God, a sign and token of His careful goodness. We praise Him for His great glory; and that we can call Him our God, believing and hoping in Him. He has spoken words of truth, teaching us the will, and opening out the heart and mind of the All-holy. We love to meditate upon the redemption which the holy God has wrought for us in Christ. We think with adoring wonder of the patient workings of the Spirit.

We know that as yet we see but a part, and that not even in eternity shall we find out all that God is. We glory in the hints and promises which are given in all that we find Him in His dealings with us. In Him is grace for every need of every soul. He is able and willing to make known His love to each. "Be ye holy, for I am holy" is His commandment and His promise. He seeks us that we may not miss the knowledge and the gifts which He has in store. He calls us to seek Him. We seek what we feel our need of, and long to make our own. Without God we have nothing. All we seem to have is vain and worthless, if it does not come from Him and with His blessing.

When once the thirst after God is felt within us, we have begun to find Him. As we find, we are enabled to seek more earnestly and with more hope. There is cause for joy when we know of God as one to be sought. Who can tell the joy of knowing Him as one whom we are finding. Each means of grace is a way of meeting with God, in which He draws nigh to us with some special gift and token of good-will. There are many glad and purifying ways that lead up to God, and bring us under His holy influence. The thought and longing of an earnest heart never reach after Him in vain. When we seek Him, we receive always more than we know of. In the path of His will He meets us and goes with us. The God-man, when He gives us His Body and His Blood, makes known the strength and gladness prepared for those who seek Him with their whole heart.

"Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom He hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy."—Ps. cvii. 2.

WELL might God's people praise Him, when He brought them back to their own land. They had mingled with the heathen and learned their works; and He gave them into the hands of the heathen for a while. But He was good still, their hope in bondage, their refuge and saviour when they repented. He did not lightly let them lose the glory of their great calling; He warned them to keep their trust safe, for their own sake and for the world's good. He would not always be chiding, and in His own time He sought them from far and near, and gave them again a place in their own land. It was plainly God's work. To Him alone was due the glory of their deliverance. They thanked Him, and said out before all men how good their God was.

Shall we be silent, ashamed of God, or afraid to own Him, or thoughtless of His works which tell us what He is? Enslaved by sin, exiled far from God's presence, we were helpless to gain freedom. Our rebellions had brought upon us new banishment. But He who redeemed us at first is our Redeemer still. Faith and grace are given, by which we may be free indeed, shaking off the last sign that tells of the bondage of ignorance and sin. The enemy is stronger than we are, but our Redeemer is almighty. The redemption has been wrought, the power of sin and darkness has been broken. We are free; we only need to claim and use our freedom as the redeemed of the Lord. We are free, not to be led or driven by our own desires, but to be one in will with God and to seek our own good in His best way.

No tempter, no oppressor, can take from us the liberty with which Christ has set us free, unless we bow to let our foe fasten on the chains, and of our own will serve as the slaves of sin. We will assert our liberty and call others to enjoy the same. There are those still far off whom the Lord counts among His redeemed. He bids us help to gather them, to be with Him in His work of love, and to make His goodness and His mercy known. If we know what the tasks of sin are and what are the wages, if we know what God has done, and what is our hope as His redeemed, then surely with heart and life we must tell abroad our thankfulness.

"*Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: Thou hast the dew of Thy youth.*"—Ps. cx. 3.

THE war with sin goes on. Each Christian is a soldier, whom Christ arms and leads. He is with us always, an inspiring Presence. Multitudes, unknown to the world, are counted by Him among His truest. When some great battle of the faith must be fought, or some special effort must be made, He always has the needful forces ready. The faint-hearted are brave, and the weak strong at His word. They care not how great is the power against them, if the battle is the Lord's. They only ask where He would have them go, and what He would have them do.

"The armies in heaven" follow the "Faithful and True" whose "Name is called the Word of God," "clothed in fine linen, white and clean," which is the righteousness of saints. So we, whom the same Leader enlists in His service on earth, are equipped in the same way; else He does not own us as His soldiers or sanction what we do in His Name. How great a thought, that to each of us is given a part in the holy war which ends in the triumph of the Son of God! How we should rejoice in that gift of willingness which makes God's aim our aim, and by which we know that His strength is ours! How precious is that grace which our faith receives, and which makes us faithful; that power of righteousness by which we crush down all that would make us turn back in the day of battle; that clothing which is the pledge and assurance of victory won for God!

Faith tells us of more than man's eye can see. It is much that we fight no lonely battle with evil in and around us. We are not alone in following, even when no human voice cheers us with sympathy and no trusted comrade presses on beside us. The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation. Like dew upon the ground at dawn, so where the Sun of Righteousness throws His beams there are God's people showing that the darkness is past, and that each is doing something to save the earth from withering in sin. The youth of God are always youthful. Long years do not wear the vigour of those who have eternal life, and who for each effort seek to draw fresh power from Him in whom all live.

"*Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.*"—Ps. cxvi. 7.

CHRIST calls us from our weary helpless thinkings and askings, from our lonely toil, from the hard tasks that the world and sin lay on us. He bids us draw nigh to God through Him, to put ourselves in full trust under His care and rule, to let Him who has made and redeemed us save us in His own way. His yoke is easy and His burden light; for when we take them, He bears the load of all other burdens with us; He sets us free from other lords. He gives the love that makes His service freedom; He gives the grace to go on quietly in faith and hope.

And as we learn of Him, we gain the spirit of the higher world, we grow able to walk not by sight, but as those who know of unseen and eternal things. We are His disciples, who are prepared to learn our lifelong lesson here, in childlike trust that He will train us in wisest gentlest ways. This is the rest we choose and make our rest. But we cannot hope for outward calm in a world that is not our home, or meant to be so. We cannot close our eyes and ears to the many things that make life unquiet. We are pained by the woes of those who mourn around us. We grieve when God's cause is blasphemed, and His foes seem to have their way. It is well to be warned off from vain hopes, and led to seek the rest which may be ours even now, looking for rest in its fulness where alone it can be found.

Perhaps no truest soul has always the unbroken rest of faith. Times of unrest come to all. We are brought low in body or spirit, and our faith is shaken. Worldly needs press; even zeal for God will often tempt to unbelieving fretfulness, and to rash efforts in His cause. We forget the lessons which the meek and lowly Master is ever near to teach anew, and to enforce by the example of His own quietness in bearing with the sin of men. Often it is not till we are weary with vain struggling, and heavy laden with needless burdens, that we find our one hope to be in coming to Christ as if for the first time. Often it is not till we feel ready to perish in the storm, that we remember Him whose word of peace can make all calm. How blessed is the return of the soul to Him who is His people's only and sure and everlasting rest.

"*Make me to go in the path of Thy commandments; for therein is my desire.*"—Ps. cxix. 35.

THE word which the Psalmist uses means a narrow foot-path marked by those who have trodden it before. None need miss that path; for God's commandments fence it off, and the footprints of earlier pilgrims make it plain. We go after those who followed Christ. We know how He led them on, and we look to Him as our guide. We feel sadly how prone we are to err and stray. We mourn that we fall short of what we truly long to do and to be. We are ashamed of the disobedience of our hearts and the weakness of our desires.

But there is hope in this grief: this shame is honourable. He who begins His work in us will go on. He who changes the heart will make the life new. The desire for goodness is a gift which has in it the promise of more pure desire, and of goodness realised. To delight in the law of God after the inward man is to be of one mind with God, to will what He wills, and to love what He is. This is the beginning and earnest of all good and blessedness. But the true desire needs to be ever quickened afresh by Divine grace, and must ever show itself in earnest prayer for a more steadfast will and a more ready, active strength.

We dare not doubt God's abiding faithfulness; we must always distrust our own. Apart from Christ, with whom the Holy Spirit makes us one, we can do nothing. Christ can do no mighty work in us, if we resist or neglect His holy influences. We are apt to deceive ourselves. We may be content with slow progress. We may lose, without knowing it, the warmth and earnestness of our desires. So we need to watch and pray. We bring our desires before God, that He may make them more heartfelt, more worthy of His divine longing to lead us to a safer, purer holiness. We would not be in our own hands. We place ourselves in His. We ask Him to use what means are well, to make us keep the right path, and go on in it as we ought. At His bidding we lay aside the weight that hinders or the joy that tempts. What discipline He sees needful we would not have Him spare. Be it ours to trust wholly the love which is made known in commandments as truly as in promises, and to desire not only the reward but the grace of obedience.

"*I have inclined mine heart to perform Thy statutes alway, even unto the end.*—Ps. cxix. 112.

THE end of knowing is doing. The life proves the love. Alas, how we fail in acting according to our light! How poor our actions seem, when compared with the professions of devotion which our lips make! We err from the way which we see plainly marked as the way of duty. We choose a lower path, when the higher is open for us. We go on steadfastly for a while, and then are hindered. We do not run with patience, but spend much time and strength in regaining ground which we have lost. God's grace does not fail us; neither does it work for us, so as to spare us the effort of willing and doing in the strength which it gives. It is by that effort that we make God's power our own, and form the habit of acting along with our Divine Helper.

It is easy to believe that our minds are made up, and that our hearts are firmly right with God, and that we shall never falter. But resolutions need to be renewed, as circumstances change, as old impressions lose their force, and fresh influences make themselves felt. Grace needs to be kept growing and active, if those resolutions are to be kept. All is vain, unless we persevere unto the end. We know not at what hour we may find that our course on earth is run, and that the direction in which we are going fixes our hereafter. So who can tell the importance of each part of that course? We look on to the end, and set before us what our hope is. We try to foresee and prepare for all that may have to be faced, so that nothing may take us unawares.

To win Christ and be found in Him is the reward of faithful souls. We gain it if we endure unto the end and are faithful unto death. Light and but for a moment is all that must be borne compared with this. Little is the utmost that we are called to do for such a prize. Christ must be in us the hope of this glory, ruling our natures and enabling us for a life of obedience like His own. We yield ourselves to Him with a glad and thankful faith. We have bound our wills to the Divine will, and hour by hour we see to it that there is no shaking of our settled purpose. We watch and pray while we press on. We obey the will of a living God, close to us and caring for us always.

"I am for peace: but when I speak, they are for war."
Ps. cxx. 7.

DAVID proved more than once that there was no war in his heart against Saul who sought his life. Christ came to bring peace on earth, making God and man one. He showed in His life and death God's good-will. He pleads with men to put away their natural enmity and have the peace of God. His life's trials tell of the patient love with which God bears now with those who try Him. He was beset by those who watched to find something to accuse Him of. His words and acts of truth and grace were made ground of blame. His mercy was met with hatred. Still He went on in His own Divine way, doing nothing to make peace hard, striving to overcome evil with good.

We must not wonder if the world is to us not all unlike what Christ found it. However quiet we may strive to be, we are not out of the world, and so must be tried by the evil that is in the world. Those who love not God, love not their neighbour. Those who say they love God are often most hard and unloving to men. Some seem to hate peace; for they take pains to break it up, and watch for ground of quarrel, and are slow to part with a grudge. If we have to take an active place in the world's work, war will be forced on us. However well meant and right our acts and words, some men are sure to find in them cause of strife.

We are trusted with much that is not ours to yield. We have no right to give up truth, or the claims of God, for our own peace sake. But we must take heed that in God's cause we use only the weapons which God gives, and that we fight for His triumph, not ours. We are not bound always to yield our own rights for peace sake. That might be to encourage sin and selfishness, and lead to no lasting peace. "As far as in us lies" we must aim to live peaceably with all men; not only with the peaceable, but with those with whom grace alone can enable us to avoid strife. We must seek peace from love of it, and as God inspires us. Though we seek in vain, our duty is unchanged. The blessing of the peacemakers is not only for those who succeed in that Christ-like work. The promise is for what we are in spirit and aim, not for what we are able to do.

"*We will go into His tabernacles: we will worship at His footstool.*"—Ps. cxxxii. 7.

DAVID looked forward with joy to the setting up of the ark in its place. It would be a sign that God was among His people. What good might come to the long afflicted tribes, if they would draw nigh to the God who thus drew nigh to them! What union might they find in their common worship and in the gifts of blessing which they would share! God's invitation must be welcomed; God's grace must be sought and received by faith; God's blessing must be waited for in lowly adoration. The tabernacle stands in vain and is only a reproach, while men stay without and fail to seek the presence of the Lord. God is insulted if men withhold the worship which He promises to welcome and reward.

The everywhere present and always gracious God has His places of special presence and His special ways of grace. He calls us one by one, and He calls us to come together. We dare not slight Him by seeming to undervalue the privilege of approach. We dare not risk loss of good to our souls by neglecting any means of grace. The tabernacle of God is with men now, as it was not in the days of old. The promise "I will dwell in them and walk in them" is fulfilled. We enter into the abode of God, where His special love works and His special gifts are stored, when we are "baptized into Christ," and are made members of Him. Thus we go spiritually within the sacred bounds. Alas! that any of us should be as if we were still without, or had found no joy where God is, nothing to move us to adore.

We look forward to going into the temple on high, where God reveals His glory to those who are made fit to see Him as He is and to adore Him. Meanwhile we forsake not the assembling of ourselves together in the tabernacles which we prepare and hallow to be wholly His. We exhort one another the more, as the day draws near when the gates of the temple on high shall be thrown open for those to go in, who have loved the Lord's presence, and have learned to worship Him here. Where He has come to meet us is His footstool, the holy ground where by faith we have seen Him. There we bow in adoration, remembering the goodness we have found and the glimpses of His glory that have shone upon us.

"Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it."—Ps. cxxxix. 6.

ONLY God can know God. We are the creatures of His hand, with such minds as He has given us, and with such knowledge as He puts within our reach. We expect beforehand that there must be much in the nature of God and in His works, too great and high for us to search out and explain. The clearer and fuller the light we have, the more we feel how vast is what still lies unexplored. Our eyes fail before what is too bright or too far off; so our minds do not grasp what is beyond the power which has been given them, and the glory of God blinds them as we draw near to gaze. We can know God as our Ruler and Saviour, though He warns us back when in our pride we would seek to behold Him as He is.

We adore the God who reveals Himself; we adore Him also as the God who hides Himself. We can know so little of ourselves and of our fellow-men and of the natural world around us; we need not think it strange that He who made and guides and upholds all things should be only known in part. No wonder that His knowledge is above ours, not only in that He knows more, but that He knows in a way past our power even to think of clearly. Our knowledge is gained little by little, and with hard effort. At best it is partial. We mistake and forget. We miss the bearings of one truth or set of truths upon others. We are misled by the look of things, or the words used to clothe thought. What we think we know, we often only wish or guess.

God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. He is never away in presence or in attention from any part of that creation, of which He is the cause and the ruler and the end. To Him all things are known, not as they seem, but as they are in their whole meaning. He traces each feeling in each creature that feels, and each thought in everyone who thinks. The past, the future, our whence and our whither, God knows. We are understood. He who knows is a Father who knoweth whereof we are made, and pitieth His own children. We may well feel awe while we live in the blaze of the light of God's all-seeing eye. But we may be glad of heart and at peace if God sees Christ in us and us in Christ, and watches in us the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit.

"*The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous.*"—Ps. i. 6.

WE can go on in the way of righteousness, though we are still far from the rest of the righteous. If our true wish and aim be to find and keep the way in which God would have us go, He will make that way plain, and will lead and help us on in it. He who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life will own and bless us. He will give us light, and bear us forward safely so that we shall never perish.

God knows the direction in which our hearts look, and the path which our wills choose. He never needs to ask "Where art thou?" He marks each step we take, and what it costs of effort and self-rule and prayer. He does more than watch. His knowledge and His power are one, and they act together. Where His all-seeing eye follows, His Almighty hand of grace reaches, holding out all needful care and help. He knows how hard the way of each true soul is, and all that makes it hard. The narrowness, the steepness, the roughness, the thorns, the snares, the foes are all known, one by one. So is all that in each soul which makes it feel tired and sore and fearful.

While we humbly try to be true and to trust Him, we are safe. Though we seem to strive in vain, and to make no progress, God looks on us with favour, as we move earnestly onward. Though we can see perhaps no sign that the good end draws nearer, God does. The work is His, not ours, and He is careful that it should not fail. We shall stand, in spite of all that threatens to overthrow us or turn us aside. We shall stand in the great trial day. We shall stand, when the end is reached, more firmly for all that we have borne. Then shall the wicked no longer trouble, and we shall be at rest from our wearying infirmities.

God knows the place which is being prepared. All the way He wisely fits us for it, by the cares that try us, as well as by the consolations that cheer us and the gifts of grace that strengthen us. We know that God knows what we do not know yet but shall know hereafter. Whither Christ has gone we know, and the way we know. He calls us after Him, and He is with and in us, giving of His own righteousness and enabling us to follow the steps of His holy life. So shall we be always known of God and accepted in the Beloved.

"*They that know Thy Name will put their trust in Thee.*"
Ps. ix. 10.

THEY who know God know that He is Love, and that He is true. None have ever sought Him faithfully and found their hope fail. Always He has been more to His people than in their time of happiest faith they thought to find Him. In the perils alike of prosperity and of hardship He has proved Himself a sure strength. There is one voice from all ages and all lands. We have a great cloud of witnesses, who declare what God has been to them, and what He, as our God, is pledged to be to us.

It ought to be no hard thing to lay ourselves upon His tried goodness, and to rest in quiet faith on One whose Name is thus made known to us in the triumph of His faithful ones. We ought with no misgiving to fly to Him, who in the life and work of Christ has made known so clearly what He is. It is a sore wrong to hold back any of our trust, when He has given us so many and sure means of knowing Him. It is a wrong, moreover, against ourselves; for we miss the good which is ready for our faith to take and to enjoy. When we hear the Name of God, we are reminded of all that He has shown Himself in all His dealings with His people. As we draw near we learn for ourselves the goodness and the glory of which the Name tells. God means more to us as we understand better what God is and what we may find Him. God is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. We change, but He remains with no variableness neither shadow of turning.

In our times of need we turn to Him who owns all things, and can give to whom He will. When we are wronged, we lift up our hearts, lest we be led to sin because we are sinned against; we leave our case with the Most High, who rules over all. When dangers threaten, He meets the shock of all that might do us harm, while we are kept in safe peace under His shelter. When we are blessed with worldly good, we do not rest in it as if it were our all; we do not trust in uncertain riches which are only for a while, and may leave us still poor towards God. We trust in the living God, whom we seek with greater earnestness as we find Him more fully and learn to know His Name better.

"The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage."—Ps. xvi. 6.

THE sin of man grieved the holiness of Christ. Their woes pained His love. Who can think of all the ways in which He was a man of sorrows, who bare our griefs and lifted up upon His heart the dreadful burden of our sins? Yet there was a joy set before Him, and He could always rejoice as He looked forward to the end, and saw the fruit of the travail of His soul in the glory of His redeemed. There was joy in His heart, such as only One who was God could know. For He loved with the strength of Divine love, and knew the worth of those to whom He might give power to become the sons of God, and to grow worthy of their Father.

And now He rejoices in us as He sees us grow to be more indeed His own. And all things are ours, if we are Christ's, and He delights in us to do us good. Our cross may be painful and our earthly way dark, and our lonely lot bare of almost all that the world can give to make us glad. Still we can, though having nothing, possess all things; and may be ever calmly thankful, resting in the portion which we have in God. If we long for Him and His goodness, He will give a sure sense of possession that will still the restlessness of desires for lower good. The good things spread around us in the Church shall make our place pleasant, however bare of consolations our state in the world may be. The inheritance of grace and glory shall be so real to faith and hope that the poorness of our earthly lot shall seem not worthy to be compared. All things that vex and try may be taken as pledges of more peaceful joys and more abounding treasure, and as means of growing more fit for full possession and enjoyment.

What great rights have we in God through Christ! What means of approach, what closeness of union! What fellowship with holy ones in light! What beginnings of that sanctification which the Divine love is pledged to perfect! Who can count up, part by part, the privileges of our high calling in God? Who can tell the ways in which they can bring joy and rest to souls? For every want of soul there is provision made in the rich store of good which our Saviour has laid up for us. Whatever does not touch our hold on this need not rob us of happiness, and does not make us poorer.

"The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple."—Ps. xix. 7.

WE read the signs of God's glory in His handiwork. We trace with awe and wonder the sure laws by which He rules the world. We learn His wisdom and His might. But all this by itself does not tell us of His love or of His thoughts to usward. Were this all, we could only tremble in dread before an unknown Being, and ask, with no hope of a sure reply, what He would have us do, and how we could be safe in His presence.

The law of God made known in His Word is not like that orderly system by which dead Nature is ruled. God gives us the care of ourselves, and teaches us how to do our duty to Him and to one another. Without God's law the soul of man is sure to err, going away from God and its own good. The law checks it, and sets it in its true course, to move as God first meant. That law is perfect, for it declares the will of a perfect Being. It meets all the needs of men. Its end is to make men perfect and complete in all the will of God. Those who obey it prove how good it is, and grow to oneness of will with Him by whose will they try to be guided always. It aims not only to rule conduct, but to convert the soul, the inner being, by forming habits of right-doing, and so changing the character. It shows us what He is from whom it comes, and in each command there is a pledge of all needful help.

Again, the testimony of the Lord is a law; for each truth that we hold as His Word binds us to some duty that follows from it, and asserts Heaven's claim upon us. There is uncertainty in all merely human thoughts of God, and in all man's unaided gropings after truth. Only God can make known God, and enable us to think truly of Him, and so to acquaint ourselves with Him as to be at peace. The witness of His Word lights up the testimony of His works. And it unfolds much that we could never have learned in any faintest way from any other source. It finds us indeed simple in all Divine knowledge, and gives us sure facts on which to rest our faith and hope. It tells us of a God whose love is brought near in Christ, and who claims our love and service. So it makes us wise unto salvation with a wisdom that cometh from above.

"He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation."—Ps. xxiv. 5.

WHEN Christ passed the gates of heaven the Divine blessing was His, as man, to give to men. He became the Author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him. His face is towards us for good. We can seek His face now, drawing near to Him where He meets souls with grace, trying with single eye and true will to obey and follow Him.

That seeking is in answer to His call, a fruit of what He has done. The "honest and good heart" is made so by Him. This is the first blessing; the promise of that which is infinite and eternal. It prepares us to receive what is given where the Divine love is welcomed and can have its way. Blessing is the going forth of that love to make all things work for good. It is not in word only, but in power. When it comes, the Divine love is not only heard about; it is felt. Angels throng down the ladder that is set between earth and heaven, and out of the treasures of God we are made rich. We do not exhaust the store; part of the blessing which each gift has in it is the desire and hope for yet larger good.

The God of our salvation has won our trust, and we seek His face as a Father and a friend in Christ. As we are led by His Spirit, we have the witness that God is doing what He wills to finish. The true aim is from God, and shall gain its end from Him at last. The hunger and thirst after righteousness which He gives shall have all their craving satisfied. He blesses with righteousness. That is the salvation which He works in us to work out to its perfection. He blesses by imparting it, and He blesses us for having it. Because He loves us He gives us righteousness, and He loves us with a new love as He sees His righteousness in us.

When Christ shall call the saved to their full reward He shall welcome them as the blessed of His Father, whom the Divine blessing has prepared on earth for the blessedness of heaven. They shall inherit the kingdom, and the crown that they receive shall be a crown of righteousness. It shall be given to them and to all who love His appearing, who seek His face in the ways of faith and obedience, looking forward to the time when He shall appear, and they shall be like Him, seeing Him as He is.

"*His anger endureth but a moment; in His favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.*"—Ps. xxx. 5.

WHEN darkness closed round the cross, and the light of His Father's favour was hidden, Christ felt forsaken. Then His soul knew all the burden of that sin which He bore, and on which God's anger rested. But there was joy set before Him. When the cross and shame were past, He rose to the fulness of undying life with God.

Sorrow filled the disciples' hearts in that night-time of mourning, when their Lord, for whom they had left all, seemed lost. It gave place to joy which no man could take from them, when the risen Christ appeared.

The favour of God is always towards those who seek His face and wish to live under His care. The tokens of His anger are as passing clouds that hide, but do not change, the love that still shines on. They are often signs of His favour; they throw a dark shadow, because there is strong light behind them. Well for us to be warned to turn our anger against sin and ourselves, that so we may rejoice again in that glad free life which His favour gives.

There are griefs that do not tell of sin, which belong to this passing life among passing things. Those who live most for things unseen, and seek the eternal things with firmest faith, have many a sore time of trial, when God's face of love seems turned away and no light breaks in upon the gloom. But His favour is often most loving and His presence indeed most near, when comfort is most wanting. If we wait in patient faith, we shall know that in mercy, not in anger, He has been caring for our life.

Light and but for a moment all the heaviest strokes and most lasting pain shall seem, when we have the blessing which they work for us. However long it be, the night is not for ever; but the day that comes after it is. We are willing to go with our Lord to Gethsemane and Calvary, and to bear what God sees fit of the grief that must come to those who are near Him. We are willing to bear our cross, and to carry what load God wills to lay upon us; for we can rejoice in hope. We can hear our Lord, from His place of glory, bidding us come after Him till we are with Him there.

"*My soul shall be joyful in the Lord: it shall rejoice in His salvation.*"—Ps. xxxv. 9.

JOY in God is the one joy that can be always ours. He is for ever, and He offers Himself to be a growing joy for ever. The good and pleasant things of life are brighter, when they tell us of God's love. The evils and griefs of life lose their power to harm or to cast us down, while our hearts are able to be glad in the Lord and to praise Him. His salvation is made known in great and small things day by day. He saves us from much suffering, and saves us in what is needful for us. He wards off sin. He gives grace to watch and work and fight, and to be true to Him and our own good. He bestows the safeguards that fence our souls round and build them up securely. He leads us forward, and lifts us past what is too hard for our own strength to meet. He shows to our faith and hope, signs of His care, and glimpses of the peaceful joy which awaits us in the end.

If the salvation be so glorious, what must He who saves us be! What honour that salvation is brought near in Christ, so that God our Saviour may be known as One present with us! God bids us rejoice, not only in His gifts but in Himself; not only to thank Him as a benefactor, but to love Him as a Father. So He assures us that He will make Himself known to us, and will give us more joy in Him as we know Him better. So He shows His desire to rejoice in us, as He makes us worthy to be called His children. It is not enough to trust in God and obey Him; so far as we fail to find Him One to make us joyful, we withhold part of the honour which is His right. We are called to take the cup of salvation, and to praise God for it with joyful heart and lips and life.

Passing joys will have more power to gladden us, the more we look to God as the source of all. They will have less power to hold our hearts to earth, as God the giver of them attracts and satisfies. Temptations will lose their strength, as we grow able to find our joy in the things of God which faith makes our own. Sorrows will be as clouds, that hide the sunshine for a while, and make us think more of its worth. In God, though now we see Him not, we can rejoice, looking forward to the time when salvation shall be revealed, where there is no night or cloud for ever.

"*Forsake me not, O Lord: O my God, be not far from me.*"
Ps. xxxviii. 21.

WHEN we seem to face sin and to bear reproach, unhelped and alone, it is comfort to know that our cry to God is such as Christ spoke in His hour of desolation. When He was bowed under the weight of our sins, and those for whom He did good rejoiced in what seemed His downfall, the support of His Father's presence was withdrawn. He felt the loss of that which He would teach us to long for as the one thing which we cannot spare.

While we remember how God hid His face from His beloved Son, we dare not doubt His truth or His care for us. We bow humbly and meekly to the Divine will. We give thanks for the love that calls our sins to mind, and bids us be zealous and repent and seek God's face. And we bless God for the grace that leads us to follow what is good with a true aim, however sadly we may feel that we come short. For that is a sign that, though all others forsake us, the Lord is still our God. It proves that He claims us as His own, and that we can claim Him and have good heart in holding fast to Him. In sin and in sorrow alike we ask how we may draw nigh to Him, that He may draw nigh to us. If our sins come between Him and us, we long to be made pure in heart and life, that we may see God and walk with Him. None but He can give the purity we need.

When griefs darken over us, we long for the light of God's comfort. He does not indeed forsake any who have not lost all will to meet Him as their God. He seems to forsake, that we may be warned what it is to be indeed forsaken. He is often nearest when He seems most far off. In care for us He warns us, when we begin to wander, when we drift from the shore, and the shore seems to move away from us. If we feel the want of God, and seek Him as He teaches us, we shall find Him all that He tells us He is. We are not wrong when we ask God to show His power openly in our behalf, and spare us what tries our faith and faithfulness. But if God see well to try us long, still we can thank Him that He is never far off, and that in due time we shall know how surely He has been our help and our salvation always.

"All this is come upon us; yet have we not forgotten Thee, neither have we dealt falsely in Thy covenant."—Ps. xliv. 17.

THE stroke of God's love may smart as much as the stroke of His wrath: yet those who know Him as a father do not feel like those who only dread Him as a judge. And again, the cross which is the due reward of sin is not the same as the cross which lifts a true soul to higher and stronger purity. Even when our lot is hardest we may have in our trials proof that God is thus caring for us and saving us from our own blind wilfulness.

Happy are we if our heart condemn us not, and if the shortcomings which keep us lowly tell of no unfaithfulness in will! Happy are we if we suffer because we have been true to God, and have chosen loss, rather than the pleasures of sin, or peace won by unfaithfulness! If the cross be faced because it stands in the path of obedience, and we will not turn aside; if God be in our thoughts while we keep our word with Him on whose word we trust, then we have a right to be glad. "All that is come upon us" has still its power to pain but not to harm. We count the cost, and, with a clear view of the whole case, choose to put ourselves into God's hands. We cannot break our covenant with Him.

God has pledged Himself to us, but He has not promised to lead us by the way we choose, and to bless us whether we are true or false. He is true to us, when He keeps us true, even at the cost of trying our faith and tempting us to doubt. We must be most careful not to go from Him, or let Him go, when our hold on Him is tested. We do not forget God when in His Name we are called to fight. We remember the promises of His grace, while we watch and strive not to forget our duty. While the flesh shrinks on the cross, we look to Him, and take care that the higher, nobler self may live with vigour renewed day by day. The grace that has upheld us is our trust still. The Word of God will not betray those who believe and act upon it. God takes away lesser things that He may give better. He cuts loose our hearts from what would make us less free to walk steadfastly in His ways. He helps us to rise unhindered towards good which He teaches us to long for. The faith in a faithful God, which experience has strengthened, strengthens hope and keeps us faithful.

"*Call upon Me in the time of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me.*"—Ps. l. 15.

TO thank God aright is to offer Him the truest worship. When we acknowledge all we have from Him of good and hope, we meet most fully His claim upon us. We praise Him, not in thought, or feeling, or word, or life, but with all these—with all we are and can. We praise Him best when we call upon His Name, showing by our faith and desire our feeling of His goodness in the past and our value for what He gives.

The time of trouble is the time of our life on earth, where sin abounds, where we still bear the infirmities of the flesh, where we must be often sorely tried and very weary. There are times when the cross is sharper and heavier, and the flesh sinks in its weakness, and the way seems long and rough. There is a time when the soul is called to go down into the dark valley, where none but God can be with it. Trouble has in it a new promise of good. Each conflict gives a fresh claim on Almighty help. Our cry of faith is already praise; and in it we draw nigh to Him who draws nigh with deliverance and blessing which will rouse us to yet greater thankfulness. We shall, if we are faithful, be made stronger and purer. We shall be braver and firmer for all after conflicts.

So does the thanksgiving of hope mingle with the praise to which past mercies call us, when we let our requests be made known. Often in His wisdom God sends one trouble, that by means of it He may deliver us from a greater. He troubles our earthly peace that we may find more of the lasting peace of God. He teaches us, in our time of loss, how precious are this world's treasures, for which we have failed to praise Him worthily, that He may make stronger our hearts' hold on the holier and more lasting treasures for which we shall praise Him in the home on high for ever. All trouble tells of sin, and the sorest trouble is sin. That worship in which we show the Saviour's work and call on God for mercy is one of praise and thanksgiving. We glorify Him for the right of humble access. We look forward to the time of full deliverance, when we shall join in the eternal anthem, "Glory to God in the Highest!"

"Thou tellest my wanderings: put Thou my tears into Thy bottle: are they not in Thy book?"—Ps. lvi. 8.

WHEN David fled from place to place, God counted each weary step. When his heart beat quick, its every throb was noted. No sign of feeling that his griefs drew from him was lost. In God's book were each one, and the sum of all. So with the Son of David, who had not where to lay His head, and whom His own, whom He came to save, went about to slay. The Father's eye went with Him, as He went about doing good and with His will set to be obedient unto death. All was part of the work done before Heaven and written there. It was part of the sacrifice on which God willed that man's hope should rest. Christ found, when He reached the joy set before Him, that all had been remembered by a faithful God. He reaped in joy, as He had sown in tears.

We have the same God as David. Christ is with and in us, while we bear our cross and wander where He leads us in the way of sorrows. We are not out of sight of heaven, though none seem to care to ask where we are, but those who would do us harm. We are not out of the mind of God, though our cry goes up, and is as if no ear heard. We do not pass on from day to day, having borne in vain what lies with such weight upon our memory and our heart. If we try to live so as to praise Him whom we trust, if we leave rest and the world's good things for His sake, and bear toil and loss at His call, it is surely well with us. Our faith may be trembling, and our life may look to us made up of falls and failures; yet if we honestly aim to be true, we are kept safe under God's care.

Whatever we do and suffer now is noted, and has its bearing on the days to come. When we go forth in His Name and at His word, when by any sign of grief we tell Him of our pain, God knows it all and He remembers. How much it is, how long it lasts, how many new efforts of faith it needs, all is written down. Nothing is too small for God to take note of, if it is in any way a sign of what we love and what we will, if it has to do with our good here and for ever. We do not see God's book as yet, we do not feel, perhaps, how carefully God watches over us. But we wait in faith till His time comes, when He will show us.

"*Power belongeth unto God. Also unto Thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy: for Thou renderest to every man according to his work.*"—Ps. lxii. 11, 12.

GOD warns us not to trust in man, or in vain things that cannot save, but in Him only. God has said that He is the One strong and just and good, who has a right to be our hope. With Him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Sure proof comes ever newly of what God is. Power is His: there is no power but of God. None can say to Him, What doest Thou? His will works on to its end, using all things as its means.

The forces of Nature are in His hands; they do the tasks which He sets them, guided by His law, yielding to each influence He is pleased to bring in upon them. The powers that be in the world are subjects of the King of kings; they hold rule in His Name, and are wholly in His power. The Church acts and speaks with authority, because "all power is given" to Christ, who uses her to put forth that power for Him. God's power belongs to a God whose name is love, and it works to bring good to those whom He loves. He bears long with the wicked and unbelieving, for He would have none perish. He tries the true and earnest, seeming at times to withhold mercy, only that they may gain it in fuller and higher ways.

The Judge of all the earth does right, and can ask the conscience of each "Are not My ways equal?" As is the work of each, so is his reward. We come from God, and what power we have to do well comes from Him. His mercy spares us, warns, teaches, strengthens us with faith and hope and love. The gospel of God's mercy in Christ is the "power of God unto salvation." We know of a growing oneness with Christ, as by Him abiding in us we work the works of God. Whatever may be against us, we gain the settled assurance that it can have no power at all, except it be given of our Father. So we cast ourselves upon the might and mercy of a righteous God. The mercy which enables us to please Him will judge what we do, with the mercy that looks on us as members of Christ. He will render to us according to our works, which are His works in us. He will perfect and make our own for ever the gifts of grace which will fit us for the work in which the glorified find rest.

"*A Father of the fatherless, and Judge of the cause of the widows, is God in His holy habitation.*"—Ps. lxviii. 5.

GOD is the careful Father and Guardian of those who from Him have their life. He is the wise firm judge, dealing out right to all who are under His rule. His tenderness is made known in fullest ways to those who give Him the trust of children. Those who in sure faith put their cause into His hands learn how true and just His judgments are. His help is given largely as the need of it is great, where those whom He has made to be ministers of His kindness are taken away or fail to do their part, and where the lonely have to look up straight to their God. The feeblest children are nurtured and shielded with the gentlest fatherly care. The most friendless have the mightiest claim upon the championship of the judge.

We are not friendless when man forsakes us. Heaven is not like earth, and God is not like man. In the habitation of God no envy or malice comes, no falsehood is spoken. All things are known in their truth by Him who has all things in His power; and He is Love. When Christ, in whom men saw the Father, went away, He promised not to leave His people orphaned, but to come again. Now, by the Holy Spirit, we have Him with us, and God is revealed to us as our Father and Friend in Christ. Led by the Spirit, we are sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty. So we can call upon God for all that a father gives. We must be to Him all that a father has a right to claim. Adopted into His family, we are given grace to walk worthy of God our Father. We must not think to be saved from outward harm, if we are careless about being kept safe from the inward spiritual hurt of sin. Would we keep God's blessing and be His heirs, we must live and look up to Him as His sons.

The Church is not bereaved and without a protector, now that her Lord has gone and the world looks upon her as an easy prey. God is with her, though unseen. His tabernacle is where she is. Her children must not lose their faith in God, who from His dwellingplace on high takes note of all that tries and wearies her, and whose Presence draws nigh with power. She is not widowed as she seems. Her "Maker is her husband."

"*They that lay wait for my soul take counsel together, saying, God hath forsaken him . . . . . for there is none to deliver him. O God, be not far from me.*"—Ps. lxxi. 10—12.

THE world has no thought of the eternity in which God works; or of the ways, often strange and hard for the wisest faith to trace, by which He leads His people. The fall of David was the signal for temptations to close thickly round him. When all seemed lost, it was taken for granted that God was lost, and that the Divine arm would shield him no more. Every secret foe became an open one.

The powers of evil watched around Christ, and thought their triumph was come when His soul was left in darkness. But He who could say "My God," knew that God to whom He kept faithful was within call. Joy was set before Him, and He withstood the temptation to let go faith's hold. He bore on, speaking to God lest the taunts should make an echo of unbelief within Him. The same Christ bears the same sort of trial now in His Church, and in His people, one by one. His presence makes it sure that God, though He hides Himself, can hear the cry of the most trembling faith, that prays Him to help before the strain on faith becomes too hard.

We dare not think the world is right when it declares that the Church is weak and proved to be without God. God seems to leave her for awhile, that she may find out all the value of His help. When she is lifted up and lets go her hold on Him, He lets her go a little, lest she should fall wholly away. He brings her back more lowly and so more safe; He gives to her foes new proof that she is His and that He is Almighty. In our own lives, how heavily are temptations heaped on us when we begin to sink. The hosts of evil camp around us. When we are wounded they rush on us. When we are down they crowd to keep us from rising. Our sins, our failures, are held up in mockery to daunt and shame us. We are tempted to think that God has withheld His grace, and that now we have fallen, He leaves us to our ruin. We are ready to say that it is useless to hope and strive. While we, however feebly, long for God, He is not out of reach. In the midst of the fire, which we feel that our own sin has kindled, one like the Son of Man will come down, to be with us, to loose us, and to bring us out unharmed.

"*God is the judge: He putteth down one, and setteth up another.*"—Ps. lxxv. 7.

ISRAEL in her extremity, threatened by foes from the North, looks everywhere for aid. The powers of the world can give none. Only when she looks up to Him from whom all power comes does she find confidence. God uses earthly means, and the strength which He has put into man's mind and arm; but He is free to do so or not. He it is who brings low or sets on high; taking away power or trusting with it, and seeing that without fail each is in the end put in his right place and has his due. His hand of might holds the cup which all who go on with hard unhumbled hearts must drink, receiving in themselves their sin's due reward. And the judgments of God shall set God's people free from sin within them and around them.

We keep in mind God's dealings with His old Church and with men one by one. What though the Church be in the midst of the world's powers, none taking her side, and some in arms against her! This makes her no less safe, while she can look up and leave her cause with God. It is well for the world's powers to side with her; for that is to side with her God and to have His blessing. But the Church needs them not; for God needs them not. He can give them the high work of doing His will; but He can do all by Himself.

And so with our own souls in their times of lonely struggle. We do wrong to God when we act as if man were stronger than He. When we are low, it may be that our fault has brought us down, and we suffer under the just rule of our God. He teaches us to humble ourselves under His mighty hand, that in due time that hand may exalt us. It is not for us to avenge ourselves. The cup of retribution is in God's hand, not in ours. We know not how to mingle it, or how full it ought to be. We know not how to deal it out by just measure, and may only add to our own sin while we think that we work for God. Be it ours to praise God always, while in the midst of trouble, or when we have passed through it. We seek to lead others to share and to glorify His mercy. We are patient with those who fight with God: we grieve and pray for them: for we know that He will repay as a just Judge who does right to all.

"*So we Thy people and sheep of Thy pasture will give Thee thanks for ever.*"—Ps. lxxix. 13.

THE Shepherd was assailed when His sheep and His fold were threatened. The heathen fought against God when they made war with His people. True, they were made to work God's ends, and used to punish sin; but this was not in their thoughts. So with the Church now. God is struck at through her. There is comfort in the thought that we feel what is meant for God, and share scorn with the Most High. We need not fear if we are faithful. There is warning if we have forsaken Him, and so gone out where His protection is not promised. We may well fear if we wander wilfully and lead others from our God, and so bring scorn to Him.

Our hope is that we still are His by right, though we have cast away the blessings of His rule and care. He turns not away when, bound fast in sin and speechless with shame, we sigh towards Him. His power can save us when we seem at the point to die. The Name of God gives us hope, for it brings before us all the great record of His might and love. And while we praise God for what has been, it is but a little step to praise Him beforehand for what we know He will do in behalf of those whose faith He draws towards Him. The Church asks not the ruin of men who wrong her most. While she is God's Church she must be of the same mind as God, who seeks the good of all. She desires the downfall of the forces of evil which thwart the merciful plans of Heaven. We would have the sevenfold power of sin that worketh death met with the sevenfold power of God's life-giving Spirit.

When we who bear God's Name fail to live as His people and to follow Him as our Shepherd, we bring reproach on Him and we strengthen the hands of His foes. Let us give thanks now, that we may in the life that is for ever have full knowledge of all His claim for gratitude. Let us show forth His praise in this generation, that we may be to His glory in those that are to come. We thank Him by welcoming His grace and gladly living by the rules which He lays down for our good. We show forth His praise when we grow in likeness to Him whom we follow, and when the world is won to glorify God, seeing our good works.

"All nations whom Thou hast made shall come and worship before Thee, and shall glorify Thy Name."—Ps. lxxxvi. 9.

THERE is none other God but one,—the Father, of whom are all things, and we in [for] Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by Him" (1 Cor. viii. 5, 6). The nations knew not God, and worshipped instead the creatures of their own thoughts, which they called gods. But the imaginary works of these imaginary gods were not as the works of the living and true God. They were like the men in whose thoughts alone they had any being. The God of Israel is the God of the Gentiles also. He has left none without witness. Even those who have had to feel after an unknown God have been shown much of Him in their own nature and in the world around them.

In the times of ignorance God patiently prepared the world for the revelation of Himself in Christ. Now He commandeth all men everywhere to repent. And He lays on us all the duty of taking part in making known the Gospel of the risen Christ. The Holy Spirit has come, that all nations may hear the wonderful works of God, and that in Christ all the families of the earth may be blessed. There are none whom God has not made; on all He has a Creator's claim. On those whom He has made anew by giving them the life of those who are born of water and the Spirit He has a yet higher, holier claim. He might enforce His rights, but in His mercy He stoops to give to men the dignity and the blessing of free beings. Along with this, there is the danger of more heavy guilt, if such goodness be despised, and such honour be offered in vain.

Into all the world the Church, with whom Christ is "all the days," shall bear the light and the power of the Gospel. The earth shall be full of the true knowledge. "In every place incense shall be offered unto the Name of God, and a pure offering." Made for Himself, people from all nations shall fulfil the end of their being. They shall come to Him who has come to them. They shall worship as He teaches them. They shall show the glory of His Name who revealed Himself in Christ, by what He makes their natures and their lives. We hope and pray for the time when the Church shall embrace mankind, when the kingdoms of this world shall be made the kingdom of God and of His Christ.

"So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."—Ps. xc. 12.

ALL men are under the sentence "Thou shalt surely die." In the signs of death that sadden the world, and in all that leads men to their grave, we see what sin has done. Thus God warns us of the sin in which we have part. Only death can admit us to the world where all things are good. So God has made us mortal, that we may have hope of a higher life. Our time here should be spent in making sure that hope, and in gaining fitness for the life hereafter.

The most thoughtless must think, as the sum of days past mounts up and they are warned of the few that can be still before them. But such thought may only lead to recklessness. The heart may be only set more upon a world which is all it cares for, and must be enjoyed now or never. Or the sadness of loss and the warnings of the near coming of death, beyond which faith and hope throw no light, brings on the soul a settled gloom. God alone, who knows how many our days are, can teach us so to number them that wise and holy influences may rule our heart. By the heart is meant the thought and feeling and will, all in man which moves and guides his life. When we listen humbly to God's Spirit telling us of days past and of days to come, and of the worth of each hour, then we are ready to learn that which can make us wise unto salvation.

How few at most are our days! how as nothing in eternity! how few when we think of the vast interests that depend upon the use we make of them! Each has its own work, which cannot be done on another day without displacing the work of that day. Each has its trials to be borne well, its temptations to be overcome, its joys or consolations to be received thankfully and turned to profit. God knows of each day and sees how far it leaves a mark for good on us, and on the world by our means. As we count up wasted days, and mourn before Him, He can teach us and enable us to improve well the time still left, so that our life may not be a failure. He who is the Wisdom of God will cause us to grow in wisdom and in maturity and in favour with God and with all that is godly in man. If we seek it, we shall gain, like Solomon, a wise and understanding heart.

"*O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our Maker. For He is our God; and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand.*"—Ps. xcv. 6, 7.

GOD is greatly to be feared and to be loved. Our joy in Him does not take away our reverence; and the thoughtful awe we feel before Him does not lessen, but adds to, our holy joy. The glad heart will find an outlet for its gladness in songs of thanksgiving; the inward homage of the Spirit will instinctively show itself in the posture of the body. So we call on one another to help in the work of praise and adoration: we summon all the parts of our being to share in the offering due to our Lord and Maker.

God, who made us, has not left us. He is our God in all the meaning of that name, only fully understood by Him. He is our Maker in a new and holy sense as the giver of new life in Christ, who is the beginning of God's new creation. And as His providence follows His creatures with unresting care, so His grace is ever with His redeemed. He gives us, in the twofold relation in which we stand to Him, a twofold claim upon His goodness. His might is pledged to our cause. His glory is sought in our highest well-being.

In the world where all things are the work of a wisdom that overlooks nothing great or small, our every need is foreseen. In the Church there is spiritual provision for our souls' life and growth and comfort and refreshment. We are the sheep of God's hand. That hand of strength guards us, one by one, from each foe and peril. That gentle hand leads us safely on through the narrow and strange paths of life, where we might stray and be lost. That firm wise hand restrains us when we go wrong, and turns us back from the snares that tempt us. That kind, healing hand lifts us up when we have fallen through our fault or weakness; it closes and binds up the wounds which pain and weaken us; it cleanses away the stains which remind of our shame. That loving hand is ever full of blessing meant for us; and however much we may receive, is still ready to make us more blessed. We are His and He is ours. Nothing that He can do is too much for His love. Nothing that He wills to do is beyond His power. Well may we rejoice that this God is our God.

"I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days."
Ps. cii. 24.

THE exile seeking his home and the place of God's presence finds his strength fail. He pleads with God to spare him that he may die in his own land, having seen Jerusalem in peace. So we learn that a desire often strong within us is not blamed by God. We may pray a like prayer, if we watch our wills and try to keep them obedient. We are warned at times by the giving way of strength. Even though our hope in God be good, there is work in our hands which we long, if it be His will, to leave in a more forward state. There are those for whom we care, for whose sake we would like to live a while longer. Our eternal Father does not scorn the wish or blame the prayer. He can prolong our time of work here, or He can use us elsewhere, perhaps for the greater good of the cause or the persons whom we leave behind. Though we are withdrawn from the work, it is His work still, which He can do by other means.

When we think of the time we have lost or misspent, and of the short time left, and of the great work given us, we are tempted to lose heart. It is a far way from the state into which sin or carelessness has brought us, to the state of those whom God admits to His holy place. How shall we grow as we ought in knowledge and in power! How shall we finish our course well! We long for time to make full use of grace and do what has been set before us. We shrink from being called away while so imperfect as we know we are. We long to undo the harm which we have done to God's cause.

It is not wrong thus to show a true sense of God's rightful claim and of our sad shortcoming. But we must trust the Eternal, who lives on while generations come and go. He can do what He wills; and what He wills is always best. Our souls are His, and are His care, as are the great interests of His world and of His Church. He will not call us away while we are wanted here, or till we are wanted elsewhere. If we are indeed one with Him here, we shall be brought closer to Him when we leave earth. We shall have part in His life still. Greater nearness to Him will fit us for the higher work which awaits us.

"*Seek the Lord, and His strength: seek His face evermore.*"
Ps. cv. 4.

THE Lord seeks us that we may seek Him. He calls us to call on Him. He prays us not to let His grace wait for us in vain. We are lonely, in a world where all things change and no one can stay long. We have a God who calls Himself our God, and who in all He is bids us find cause for joy. We are weak to bear the burden of life and to meet our strong foes. He is Almighty, and He bids us be strong in Him. We are tempted to ask, "Who will show us any good?" for so many hopes fail, and what we trust in most proves often to be false and hollow. God can put true and lasting gladness in our hearts, by lifting up the light of His countenance upon us.

The Lord is to be loved for what He is. Far from Him as we are through sin, there is hope in the first waiting of a willing ear to listen to His call. If we would find Him, we must follow the leading of His voice, and trace the ways by which His presence can be reached. We know that we seek Him, when we use in faith the means by which He can be found, and when in our lives we show a longing for Him, yielding to the will which draws us towards Him. We know that we do not seek in vain, by the strength that His grace gives for all our need. He gives more faith to rest upon His truth, more hope to go forward with a glad courage and good will, more love to be happy in the thought that God loves us. We can do all things in Christ which strengtheneth us, answering our longing for God by becoming one with us.

The gifts of strength assure of the favour which we shall enjoy, when we have wrought well with the grace bestowed. So we seek on for more strength and for a life nearer to God. In the face of Jesus Christ we see the Father. Looking unto Jesus, we press on in patience till we are changed so as to be fit to see God as He is. We thank Him for each consolation, for each time of spiritual joy. But when these are withheld, we thank Him that even so He braces us and makes us press more humbly to Him for strength to grow worthy of His favour. Always in this life we shall need to seek added strength. When we have left earth's weakness behind, we shall learn what boundless glory and blessing shine from the unveiled face of God, which we may seek and enjoy for evermore.

"He led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation."—Ps. cvii. 7.

GOD'S people in their exile felt lonely and homeless. They cried to Him whom they had left, but who had not cast them off. He made their path plain, and led them once more to the land and the city which He had chosen. The Psalmist's inspired words are more than the story of Israel's experience. The world is a pathless wilderness, in which men wander with no hope, unless God show the way and lead in it step by step. The soul is lonely where the Divine voice is not heard. There is no peace or order, no union in common life, outside the city of God, the Church of His redeemed.

Men have longed in all ages to find good. They have toiled by Nature's light and by the efforts of human wisdom. They have failed in all ages, and they have lost heart; and those who came after them have tried, only to fail in the same way. The light of Nature and the wisdom of men need God, from whom they come, to direct and sanctify them. Happy we are if we have learned that He alone can give to our life strength and meaning and aim, and enable us to find rest for our souls. We do not look to find as yet the quiet of the walled city, and the glory of its homes. We are glad to feel what reminds us that we are pilgrims, and that our rest is not in this polluted world. We even thank God that our feeling of want promises us more than we have here.

We are not alone, for Christ is with us; we do not wander, for Christ is the Way, and trusting ourselves to Him we are borne along as by the waters of a stream. We do not starve or faint; for the Bread of Life is ours, and we drink of the Rock which is Christ. Through the Sacraments and means of grace we reach the sources of grace. We have a spiritual home where our Father waits to give us welcome. We are fellow-citizens of those whose pilgrimage is past. We have fellowship with them, and with those who, as fellow-pilgrims, share our hope and our toil. We have, even now, as much as is good for us of the blessedness and peace prepared in the holy city. Christ leads us more and more into the light of God and the enjoyment of His goodness. We follow Him, we abide in Him, we persevere, till we are with Him where He is, and where we may dwell with Him for ever.

"The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek."—Ps. cx. 4.

CHRIST is King and Priest while man needs a mediator, and until God reigns all in all. The Eternal, who changes not, says "Thou art," telling of authority and power ever coming freshly from the source of all authority and power. The Son of Man did not glorify Himself. He is called of God; He uses what He is given. He has not received His dignity from men who have been before Him, nor does He lay it down for others to take up. Zechariah prophesied of Him, "Behold the Man whose Name is The Branch ... He shall be a Priest upon His throne" (ch. vi. 12).

Like Melchizedek He is King and Priest. He before whose royal glory we might shrink in awe, is the same who has offered Himself as a Sacrifice for our sins, and whose hands are always lifted up to pour down on us the gifts of blessing which His ceaseless pleading gains. To Him we are bound to pay glad homage. In His priestly work we are bidden to place our whole and sure trust. We look to the grace which the Priest bestows to enable us to please the King of Righteousness and to enjoy the peace of the holy city of God. Our Melchizedek is more than "like unto the Son of God," He is "very God, of very God begotten." We seek His blessing upon all we do. He calls us to Him when we are wearied with the conflict and the toil of life. He brings forth Bread and Wine. The Bread of God renews our strength, and the Wine which the true Vine has yielded makes glad our heart.

As long as we need one through whom our hearts' desires may reach God, there is this great High Priest with whose prevailing work we can unite ourselves. While we need the consolations of Divine grace, there are ever the uplifted hands pouring out gifts of blessing. We do Him homage as our King by the honour which we pay to the office of those who act for Him in His Church. When we meekly bear wrong at the hands of the powers of this world, we bow not to them, but to the will of the King whom we strive in all things to obey. The priesthood of Christ makes us priests unto God, and gives power for our sakes to those who minister for Him in holy things. It is through Christ the King that we are able to reign as kings over our nature and the world around us.

"Thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling. I will walk before God in the land of the living."—Ps. cxvi. 8, 9.

IN the dark hours of sorrow we learn how near God is and how sure His grace. When man's help fails and all seems lost, we find out what God can do. When He has brought us back from the gates of death, or has helped and cheered us in some great trial, we live on with a new feeling of the presence and the care of God. We resolve to live the life which He prolongs, not only in His sight but for His eye. But the strongest and most lasting motives to grateful devotion are found in spiritual mercies. Blessings which belong to this life bind us in heart and will to God, only when we look on them as the gifts of a God who saves from sin and is the source of spiritual good.

We ought to remind ourselves of what our God has done, and own it to Him in our prayers. We can look back, as the Psalmist did, and look forward, glad that this God is our God for ever and ever. God has saved our souls from death by giving us union with His own life through Christ. Abiding in Him into whom we were baptized, we are quickened more and more with His life. In our times of trial He has bid us weep not as those who have no hope. He has checked us when going in the way of harm. He has held us up when stumbling, and ready to be overthrown to our hurt and shame.

Even the just falleth seven times a day; but God saves those who are true in heart. They fall through weakness; but He does not let them cast themselves down in wilfulness, or so as not to rise again. Our spiritual life is from God. He has guarded it, and given all its cheer and promise. In the Church of God we have our work, and the strength needful to enable us for it. We renew our union with the source of life. We look in God's appointed ways for the consolations of His grace. We press on towards that land, where death has cast no shadow, and the union with God's eternal life is safe. There in the very presence of God all tears are wiped away, and even the sad memory of past falls is lost in the fulness of joy, which the knowledge of the glory of God's love gives. In perfect trust, in sure hope, in the full enjoyment of God's love, the living walk before Him.

"Incline my heart unto Thy testimonies, and not to covetousness."—Ps. cxix. 36.

NO man can serve two masters. He will hold to the one whom he loves. God has a strong rival. The world attracts us through our senses. It makes fair promises, which we are ready to believe. God seems far away. He asks for large trust and long patience. He asks for self-denial. He calls us to live for what is unseen, and for what is not yet. The heart, left to itself, goes after covetousness. We mistake about our true good. We try to live for self. We grasp at what we long for, though others must lose by our gain, and though God's law warns us back. So we are tempted to live for our lower self. We do our higher self dishonour. For we act as if we only knew of the things that are of this world, and that pass away.

God does not teach us to despise the most fleeting good which He gives to brighten our life. If we are unthankful for the least, we shall hardly feel right gratitude for what is great. He bids us hold with a loose grasp what might keep the heart from rising, or spoil its value for what lasts. He warns us to think of what we can do without, and what we cannot, and to seek the things above. He points out the danger of covetousness, which is idolatry, which turns man's heart from God, and hardens it against his neighbour.

God alone can make us so love Him as to love what He commands, and desire what He promises. He gives faith to see beyond what is around us now, where we are. His testimonies give light to guide, and hope to cheer us on. We learn His truth and His will; and so we learn what He is, and to what He leads us by His grace. We are led to live for that world with which as children of the Most High we have to do. We see of how little worth is all gain here, if it must be won or kept at the least cost of our soul's good. Faith tells us of more to win our love, and sets before hope a clearer view of what God promises. So we grow more glad to hear what God says, and our hearts learn to love Him. We welcome His words of truth. We are thankful to know what He would have us do. We obey Him as one who loves us, and who bestows on us the best of all gifts, which has in it all promise—the power of loving Him.

"Depart from me, ye evil doers: for I will keep the commandments of my God."—Ps. cxix. 115.

THE more we love sinners, the more we shall hate their sin. Our own sin ought to arouse in us the strongest hate. Our souls are given to our care. So far as evil spoils or weakens them, we lose power to work for God's glory and man's good. If we wish for God's care, we must obey His rule. If we ask Him to keep us from shame, we must do Him honour. He is a jealous God, and we dare not wrong Him by offering the service of a divided heart and a wavering will. We can choose to live in His favour as His children, or to be in His power as His creatures who have rebelled.

God claims that we be always ready to leave all at His word. He asks for sacrifices only as we are given strength to make them, and as they are needful for our good. But with sin there must be no delay or doubt. When God's will is clear, whatever tempts to trifle with it must be put from us sternly. The more subtle sin is in its nature and way of approach, the more we must shrink from it. What God has done for us and is to us tells of manifold duty. As Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, He asks for faith and loving obedience. His laws and the voice of conscience teach us how to please Him. If truths of God become to us vague or uncertain, the firm ground on which our duty rests is gone.

We need to beware lest we catch the tone of the thoughtless or unbelieving, and walking with them, cease to walk by faith. The power of the multitude is great, and we must take heed that we are not drawn with them to do evil. We are in danger of getting accustomed to what others do around us, and to think of it with a lessening dread, till at last we yield to the temptation of example. Conscience must be braced and kept tender, if it is to act as a safe guide. The light in us may be darkness, unless we watch and pray, seeking ever new light from God. We are vowed to follow Christ in the way of close obedience, with the truest faith and the highest motive. So we hold aloof from those who live not in the faith and fear of God. We have a firm word for those who would hinder us from steadfast obedience. We crush down the rising of our own evil slothful wills. We mean to serve God at all costs, and even, if need be, alone.

"*The Lord is thy keeper: the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand.*"—Ps. cxxi. 5.

THE Lord is the Maker and Ruler of all things. All souls are His. The Church of His chosen is His special care. The Church of God now has a nearer claim than His old Church, and can find a more blessed meaning in God's word of promise. She is the habitation of God through the Spirit. Her state is one of war and trial. The world that lieth in wickedness, and the prince of this world, the foe of God and man, are against her. They would smite her as Job was smitten, that she might be tempted to unfaithfulness. Often help seems far off, and her prayer brings no quick aid.

But God keeps her so that she may not lose His favour. Trial and loss come, lest she should be of the world and make terms with the evil in it, and that her hold on God's treasure may be made more firm. She learns the worth of what must be guarded strongly; she is trained for rest by the discipline of work, when faithfulness to duty is hard. He who keeps her, also comforts her. In the great heat of trial the calming shadow of God's presence soothes: it comes between her and the violence of what would be more than she could bear. He is nigh to help and cheer, so that her right hand shall not weary or her heart fail in the work and battle to which He calls her.

We have each our part in the Church's great calling and hope. Let not our eyes be cast down in doubt or fear; let us not be tempted to turn from God and things on high to that which cannot help or profit. Our help cometh from the Lord; to Him must we look to keep our souls, while we run with patience the race for the prize of our high calling in Christ Jesus. We know not what is for our true good. We may seem to lose all, when we are called to part with much that we think to be as a right hand or a right eye. But He who keeps us may see that what He does is needful for our souls' safety and true happiness. Let our one aim be to be kept from evil. God will do this, and will comfort us with His overshadowing. It is blessed to know that we are in His hands, not our own. All that seems strange and hard now shall prove at last to have been the putting forth of the power of God to keep us unto salvation.

"*This is My rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it.*"—Ps. cxxxii. 14.

GOD made Himself known to Israel, not alone for Israel's sake, but that they might be a witness to the world, and make ready for Christ. He gave a law which taught duty, setting forth His will and warning of His power. He showed how He would be worshipped and wherewith He would be served. When His people were settled in their own land, He chose Jerusalem as the place where men ought to worship. There He gave special signs of His presence in the place which His Spirit taught men how to build and to adorn. There He met His people in those holy rites which He ordained, and in which they expressed their obedience and faith. Thus He trained men to know that He alone who claimed worship and called them to Him might fix how they were to draw near.

Now the Zion where God dwells is as wide as the whole world: He has His abode and place of rest, making Himself known in power and grace, wherever His Church is. The Church of Christ is that for which all the earlier revelations of God have prepared. This is what He has desired; this alone can be meant in the words which speak of His rest for ever. God dwelt with men in manifold ways from time to time. Now Christ has come to dwell in human nature and have living union with men. God forsook the temple on mount Zion. All its glory fell to ruin; but the Church, built of living stones by the power of the Holy Spirit, is eternal.

In the world above, what was in God's mind shall be realised in full. Then shall it be known how God has been in His Church a presence, sending forth abroad holy influences, saving the world from destroying itself in its blind ignorance and wilfulness, drawing men to good, leading them to live and hope for the rest in which God finds rest. The Church on high in glory shall be the same, but changed. All that is imperfect and of earth shall have been left behind. God shall see in her what He has desired, and what He has made her. His presence shall be unveiled. He shall dwell as the source of boundless good, and shall find rest in the full unhindered going forth of His love. We cannot tell the blessedness of the glorified Church, nor in what ways she is to be a blessing, making known God's love for ever.

"Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy presence?"—Ps. cxxxix. 7.

BY the Spirit of God all beings live. The eyes of the Lord are in every place; and the evil and the good, who are always in His sight, are also in His power. We may in our pride lift up ourselves, as if there were no heaven above us; but He can reach us and bring us low. We may go down into the depths of sin, and be as if among the dead in soul, with no thought of God, no fear or hope towards Him; yet His hand keeps its hold on us. If we flee from His presence and our duty, even as Jonah did, He goes with us to show us our folly. If we go out from God among the wicked who are farthest from Him, and make our home in that troubled sea, we are made to feel, sooner or later, God's claim.

We cannot go out of God's creation; we cannot cease to be the work of His hands, whose being lasts because He wills. So we cannot flee where God is not, or shake off His firm grasp. It is vain to choose not to know God, putting from us the light of truth. It is vain to refuse to draw near to God in the ways of grace, as if God would withdraw or lessen His claim on us. The night of our ignorance does not cover us from God. God is as near to those who turn their backs upon Him, as to those who seek His face. His love may be put away, but not His power. Would we be always in peace and safety? There is but one way, and that is to press close to God in thought and heart, and to keep close to Him by receiving His grace, and by using it in willing service.

Why should we wish to leave or to be left by Him to whom we owe life and all the good and hope we have? Surely if we give our wills to Him, He is all we need. When we rise in thought to heaven we find Him there, and one with Christ who makes ready our place, we dwell in His very presence. The souls in Paradise are in God's safe keeping, and to depart from earth is to be with Christ in the rest of God. If we are parted from home and friends, and our lot in the world is lonely, God holds us in His care; He leads us where there is no path, He keeps our feet from stumbling and our strength from failing. Even in the valley of the shadow of death He will be with us, and will bring us to the land where the glory of His love shines for ever.

"*Lord, what is man, that Thou takest knowledge of him! or the son of man, that Thou makest account of him!*"—Ps. cxliv. 3.

WE praise God for His great glory. We adore Him as we bow before His throne, awed by even the little which we can know. We marvel as we think of His works, and of all that tells of His vast might and wisdom. What must our glad wonder be when we dwell on the meaning of the truth that this God is our God, and that we are glorified by what He is! Man, even in his best state, seems to have no claim to such a place of honour. But the son of man—weak, fallen man, as the word means—can all this be for him?

More than this, how can each one in the frail and dying race dare to hope that he is not lost in the great crowd, but seen and noted and the object of a separate personal regard! Yet we are sure that it is even so. God is so great that there is nothing small to Him. There is no feeling or thought in the least and lowliest, that He does not trace and weigh. There is nothing which bears on our lot for good or evil, which He fails to see in its true worth. He guides our life; He fits the load to our strength, and our strength to the load. He holds back the evil that would harm us, and moves men to befriend us, and sends even the holy ones from before His throne to serve us. He has joined Himself to our race; more than that, has taken each one of us into union with His own life, so that each of us is a habitation of God through the Spirit. Each of us can say, "The Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me," and who dwells in me.

We lift up our hearts in thankful adoring wonder towards the God who thus comes near. We are the work of His hands; we live on by His power holding us still in life. We owe every right wish and aim and the strength for each right effort to His ever-helping grace. We are dealt with in all things as members of the Son of God. If God thus prizes us, He must mean us for some high state, in which we shall show, as we do not now, the glory of our Maker and our Saviour. We must feel our dignity and rise to it. God wills to make us worthy of Himself. Be it ours to walk worthy of the vocation with which we are called.

"*The Lord looseth the prisoners.*"—Ps. cxlvi. 7.

GOD saved Israel from bondage in Egypt and Babylon. He showed the power of His arm in the cases of Daniel and of the three children. St. Peter and SS. Paul and Silas found that God was able to set them free. Christ loosed those whom Satan had bound with bodily infirmities. Christ went to "the spirits in prison" to proclaim deliverance. Now He lets the oppressed by sin go free. In our fallen state we are like Samson, when his great strength was gone and he slaved in the prison for his foes. Christ has won for us the liberty which belongs to the children of God. We need not remain in the bondage of corruption. We are free to choose the service which is perfect freedom.

But we may by our own fault carelessly or wilfully yield ourselves as the slaves of sin, and be fast bound to those tasks the wages of which is death. Our will, parted from God's will, is helpless to withstand the strong evil which chains the soul and shuts it in from light and liberty. Christ is near to help all those who call on Him or who will hear His call. He shows what freedom is to those who vainly boast that they were never in bondage to any man. He opens the prison doors and lets in the light of truth and of holiness. He makes the chains fall from the feet and hands. He breaks the bonds of old habit and hard prejudice. He sends men forth to live free and noble lives, walking in the steps of their Saviour, and working together with God. The force of temptation gives way to the will which grace purifies and strengthens.

The Son, who is the Truth, makes us free indeed. What He makes known to us of God releases from the shrinking dread which as sinners we are apt to feel. The grace which He bestows frees from the restraints of our own feebleness. For the spirit of bondage we receive the Spirit of adoption. He opens out to us a world of gladness and of hope in a reconciled God whom we trust. As life is made free, so death is no more the king of terrors; the grave is not a prison-house. Christ teaches us that death cannot hold us or separate us from the love and care of God. Christ has overcome death; He has made it a slave to loose the last ties that hold us here, and set us free to pass forth to the true life of liberty with God.

"*Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling.*"
Ps. ii. 11.

WE would not offer to the Most High God the sacrifice of fools. We would not break or cast loose the cords and bands which hold us to God's service, and keep under rule our wandering will and life. We are glad to be taught and trained, that we may worship and praise and work for God, as those who are wise in the wisdom which God gives. We pray for faith that we may see Him in His glory, so high above us, as well as in His loving-kindness, bending down so near. We think of tenderness shown by the Almighty to the feeble creatures of His hand; of love shown by the All-Holy to those who sin against Him; of invitations pleading with straying souls, so far off, and so unworthy to draw near as children to the great King of Heaven.

The cost of our adoption must not be forgotten in the joy of it. Freedom of approach does not warrant freedom of manner. Only if our life shows fear, have we a right to rejoice before God. The angels know God best, and worship Him best. They bow in awe before His glorious Presence, showing their sense of the privilege of adoring One so great. The majesty of the object of their worship exalts them. We try to serve Him as He is served on high; and as we find out more of His goodness, we would learn how to bring Him more acceptable homage, serving Him with reverence and godly fear. So shall we rejoice before God with a thoughtful mind as well as with a glowing heart.

Christ is the Son of Man, who calls us brethren, and even takes us into living union with Himself. He is also the Most High God; and the nearness which makes our heart thrill with rapture warns us also to tremble under the solemn consciousness that we have so closely to do with God. None may dare to forget who He is and what we are. Familiarity in word or manner is an outrage on His love as well as His glory, and shows want of intelligence as well as of the right spirit of devotion. We offer to Him our worship and our work with the glad trust of those who are sure of His fatherly good-will and patience; we remember the might and majesty of the awful God in whose Presence none may presume.

"Sing praises to the Lord, which dwelleth in Zion: declare among the people His doings."—Ps. ix. 11.

GOD, who is everywhere, made known His Presence, in His own ways and for His own ends, in the place where He chose to set His Name. He had His abode there, and called His people to Him that they might be helped to bring their worship before Him and to receive His blessings. In times of joy they drew near to the holy shrine of His Presence with thank-offerings and songs of praise. They stirred up one another as they met in the Lord's courts, where all reminded them of past mercies which their fathers had enjoyed. They proclaimed to the heathen around what great things their God had wrought, and how they gave to Him all the glory of their triumphs.

In the spiritual Jerusalem God has His dwelling now. The Church is what she is, because God abides in her, and is with her in ways over and above those in which He is elsewhere. The shining of Divine love lights all creation; but there is a special concentration of it for special ends in the Church. We think of God as the Lord which dwelleth in Zion, rather than as but the Lord of Nature and of Providence. We find endless themes of praise in the silent workings of the power by which He changes and sways the souls of men. We dwell in reverent adoration upon the great facts of redemption, and all the mysteries of the kingdom of grace which arouse in us glad thankfulness and hope. In psalms and hymns and spiritual songs we speak to one another of that with which our hearts are full.

We do not fear to own our Saviour before the world, or to tell what He has done. We sing out, that the melody which we are making in our hearts may be heard abroad. We call on those who know Him not, to hear what our God does; that they may be led to come where His special grace is working, and to find the same joy which inspires our song. And in our lives we aim to show forth what we sing with our lips. We take good heed, lest we deny in act what we declare in word. The thought and feeling which are stirred by the doings of the Lord guide what we do as well as what we say, so that all our powers may unite in one harmonious offering.

"I will bless the Lord, who hath given me counsel: my reins also instruct me in the night-seasons."—Ps. xvi. 7.

CHRIST as man received the Holy Spirit without measure. He had the fulness of wisdom guiding His choice and will, as He grew in years and His work opened out before Him. He took counsel with Himself, and judged how best to reach the end which His love had set before Him. Through Him we are given an inheritance in God. He has won for us that eternal portion, and filled for us the cup of Divine good which we are offered. He has sent to us the Spirit from Himself to guide our wills.

Plainly we are warned how all but God fails. We are shown how sure His word is, and what great peace He gives to those who trust Him: He enlightens the dull understanding, that we may see the beauty of His truth and the purity of His law and the worth of His grace. But for this counsel all that God has provided would be offered in vain; for in our ignorance and folly we should not know its value or desire it. In manifold ways God's counsel comes to us. He deals with us as those to whom He has given powers of thought and feeling and will. He shows us what is good by the signs of His Providence, by the teaching of His Word, by the influences of His Spirit. All this is vain unless we receive the instruction with meekness, and with a ready will to rule ourselves by it. We show thankfulness for God's counsel by earnest use of it. Even until the night cometh when no man can work we must watch for light and leading, and seek by earnest thought and prayer how best we can obey the loving will of our God.

When the world around is quiet, and its claims upon thought and effort are still, when we are alone with God, we do well to watch for a while with all our powers of mind and heart, that our faith and faithfulness may be quickened. In the night-time of trial, when darkness makes the glories that shine from heaven be more plainly seen, we can learn much that the world's brightness often hides. Even now we can bless the Lord for all that He has taught us, inattentive though we have been. With what joy shall we praise Him when we know the worth of that good to which His counsel has brought us safely!

"*The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.*" Ps. xix. 8.

THE statutes which fix our rule of conduct are given by the Holy One who cannot err. They tell us what is in itself right, and cannot be otherwise. Their aim is to make our lives and our natures right. Each word that helps to make plain and enforce our duty is a proof of the good will and care of God. Till He speaks to us, we are blind and in darkness, not knowing whither we go. Our eyes could not see unless in the light: light were vain to unopened or sightless eyes. God gives us the inward teaching of the Spirit, and power to see in the clear light which the Sun of Righteousness sheds upon His Church. So it is no dim, uncertain lamp, lit by the guesses of man's wisdom, which we trust to guide our steps. The light that is in us need not be darkness; we may see even as truly as God sees, being enlightened by Him.

Blessed indeed it is to be thus saved from the misleading of our own foolish wills and erring hearts! Blessed to be thus warned against the snares and perils of our way, and shown how we ought to walk and to please God! His commandments are grievous to those who do not trust Him so as to seek their good from Him. Obedience is hard service to those who look on their Lord as a taskmaster, and would flee from Him if they could. But when the simple begins to be made wise by the truth of God, when the soul is being converted under the influence of God's perfect law, when the heart seeks God, all this is changed.

If we feel the love of Him who carefully leads us in safe ways, we rejoice to know how to please Him. As we grow to be like-minded with God, His law, which reveals His holiness and perfection, attracts us more. As our soul's eye becomes more cleansed to see the deep spiritual meaning of God's revealed will, and we are changed by its pressure on us into a holier form of character, we find a fuller, nobler joy, and know better what our joy is. There is a deep satisfaction in the sense of doing right and growing right. It is like health of the body, when all the organs move and act in due order, each fulfilling its part.

"*Unto Thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.*"—Ps. xxv. 1.

DAVID'S foes sought his life. Old sins of early days rose up to haunt him in his time of trial. The net of evil seemed to close round him. Only God could save him from defeat and shame. But he knew Him as his God, always true to those who took Him at His word, and stronger than all that could be against him. To Him he sought to bear his soul's grief, sure of finding help in the time of need.

The God of David is our God. He waits to save all those who wait on Him. They who transgress without a cause shall be brought to shame; for God will judge all who work ill to their neighbour; and they who wait on God in patient well-doing shall not wait in vain for salvation. When there are many against our soul, and we are pressed hard by inward self-reproach, as well as by outward trials, God offers a refuge and asks our trust. Our sins keep us back from Him and hide His face, so that His comfort does not reach us. We turn from their temptings with firm will; we refuse them a place in our hearts and lives; we lay the guilt and shame of them before God. We move towards Him with all the strength of all the powers of our soul. We separate ourselves from all that might rival Him. So we find His peace.

Our soul is where our thoughts and desires are. There we keep it with one settled aim, taking care that no unbelief draw us aside to grasp at vain help apart from God. It is not that our soul remains afar off, and that we seek for it from a still far-off God some boon of which it feels the need. We bring our soul to Him, that He may do for it all that He knows it needs.

Sorrow proves all other help vain. When we lay ourselves before God He gives spiritual blessing. Not at once do we feel the full power and comfort of His care. Enough for us to know that He comes to meet the soul that reaches after Him, and in its feebleness and danger is borne to Him by the longing of lowly faith. He bears it onward to the rest it seeks. He speaks not of its past sins, and upbraids it not with its failings. He gives it more knowledge of Him, and strengthens its faith and peace in Him. He makes its sorrows purify it to His glory. He guards it while He leads it on past foes and trials till it is safe and glad.

"*And in my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved. Lord, by Thy favour Thou hast made my mountain to stand strong.*"—Ps. xxx. 6, 7.

GOD cannot often trust even His truest servants with lasting prosperity. Few can go on long in a course of smooth success, without forgetting that all is in God's hand, to give still or to withdraw. Steady success tempts men to trust in self, as if it were their own doing and could not change. Like David, when his throne was firm and he ruled strongly a willing people, they forget to whose favour they owe all. Set on high, they think no harm can reach them, and no foe cast them down. Then God's face is turned away, gifts and comforts are withdrawn, that the soul may not lose its hold on the Giver and the Comforter.

Even the best gifts may be used to harm the soul that is not ever watchful to keep its lowly place near God. When faith sees the truth of things unseen, when God's love lights a flame of zeal for holy work, when there is joy in prayer, and hope so grasps its aim that it is almost changed to thankfulness, the soul's weakness and dangers are apt to be forgotten. There may be less asking and seeking and knocking, as more is found and gained. Sure of God, the soul gets to be sure of itself instead. Faith in Him whose will to save does not change takes the form of boastful assurance that the soul shall never be moved from its faithfulness. So the strength and armour needful for the evil day are not sought. The mountain on which God's grace has lifted up the soul seems like the hill which David stormed, which the "blind and the lame" were enough to guard. Above the world, in the pure air and light of God, what harm can come?

In the hour of greatest confidence the warning of weakness is in wise mercy given. The soul learns its want of what it most gloried in, and foes break through where it felt strongest. So we learn that we are nothing and can do nothing, that we may be made able to do all things through Christ which strengtheneth us. God looks upon us, and lifts us up, and gives us that in which we can stand. The joy of the Divine favour has been taken away for a while, that the Divine favour may be sought so as to be a sure source of everlasting gladness.

"*All my bones shall say, Lord, who is like unto Thee, who deliverest the poor from him that is too strong for him?*" Ps. xxxv. 10.

WE were without spiritual strength: Christ died, that we might share the power of His risen life. We were poor and needy, spoiled of that with which God at first endowed our nature: Christ became poor, that we might be made rich in the wealth of God. We were fast bound in the chains of sin: Christ undertook our cause and wrought deliverance.

Still we have to face powers of evil, against which we are helpless, if alone. The sorrows and hardships of life are more than our unaided strength can bear. The forces of temptation are too strong for our weakened will to resist. We are poor and dependent, ready to be spoiled even of what is left in our nature on which grace might lay hold.

Well for us, if we are poor in spirit, as we are in fact, and make our dependence active, trusting in God and drawing nigh to Him in faith for the help which will make evil flee. Evil is too strong for us; but God is too strong for evil, and in His strength we can do more than stand; He can supply all our need, and make us rich in all that faith grasps. He can make us more than conquerors in Him that hath loved us. Who is like unto our God in the love that loves those who loved not Him, in the care that never forgets the careless, in the power that makes the helpless mighty? Alas, how often have we laid down our arms, and lost, through neglect, the grace once given! Alas, how often have we gone in the way of sin, and been spoiled of God's precious gifts! Through our own fault we are poorer than we need be, and we give the enemy advantage over us.

Thank God, He saves us from ourselves as well as from our foes. He delivers us, again and again, in spite of our repeated wrongs against His grace and our own good. Sometimes, with what seems a rough hand, He snatches us from ruin, and saves with a firm severity, that proves more than all else how his love clings to us. We learn the greatness of our need by the cost of deliverance. On our cross we find out what cause we have to praise God for the Cross of Christ, and for the deliverance which it won and which God is ever working out.

April 8.

"And now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in Thee."
Ps. xxxix. 7.

IN times of sore trial it is often hard not to "charge God foolishly." There is need of firm resolve to hold down thoughts that will rise, and to check rash words. God's foes are ever on the watch for an answer to their taunt "Where is now thy God?" Silence is the one safe course, till we are sure that even what seems good to us may not be sin.

God encourages us to find relief in speaking our complaints to Him. We know what our state is. The facts of the case are plain before us. We look at them as they are; we turn towards God in prayer. Our days on earth are few and are soon gone. All mortal strength and glory are a show of things that only seem. We miss the objects of our restless search and toil, or else they fail to be to us what we hoped to find them. All this takes long to force its truth upon us. We cling to shadows while we can; only after many a disappointment are we taught what our life is.

Those to whom life and immortality were not yet brought to light in Christ had a trial harder than ours, when they asked how long they were to strive and suffer. We know that it is of God's will that we are made subject to vanity, and that so our state is one not to daunt hope, but to make hope eager and sure. We are shut off from the tree of life, lest we should live for ever as we are. But there is another tree of life, the fruit of which gives us a better immortality. Thus we can, in the hope of life for ever, feel our afflictions "but for a moment." God trains us now by the discipline He knows we need. He thus proves to us our weakness and reminds us of our sin. Though He slay us, though we fail to read much of the meaning of His mysterious work, still we trust Him. We wait patiently on God. We are saved by hope. That keeps us from despair and makes our faith hold fast and firm. God sees the worth of the life beyond, and spares no cost to fit us for its good. When the school of trial has done all it can do, God shall not have done with us. He will put us in the school of peace and rest and joy. There shall be no end to those days, in which we shall ever wait on God for new satisfaction, and find our hope always more than fulfilled.

"*For Thy sake are we killed all the day long.*"
Ps. xliv. 22.

WE are "more than conquerors" in all things, while we can humbly look up to God and say, "It is for Thy sake." Even that which does not plainly befall us because we are true to God, we can bear, in faith and patience. For our sake God gave His Son to die: for our sake He who loved us gave Himself for us, and through all His life as man felt the tightening on Him of the painful grasp of death: for our sake He who died lives, that we may live also.

For His sake we take up our cross, and though we sink under its weight, we cling to it. For His sake we bow cheerfully to that which helps to prove and make sure our part in Christ. As the world gets darker, the lights of heaven shine out more clearly, and faith finds their comfort and leading more real and helpful. And that which wears out the earthly tabernacle and loosens its fastenings does not tell of any weakening of ourselves. The changes of our state in this world make no change in our hold on the Divine love, save in so far as we are stirred to press more close to God, and to make surer our claim on Him whom we trust still. Though we are always beset with danger, so that we "die daily," we do not fear, if we have a good hope that we "bear in our body the dying of the Lord Jesus." If our true life be hid with Christ in God, it is beyond the reach of all but God. The strength of it is brought out most as the mortal body weakens. And we learn to take heed that we suffer not as evil doers, but that all is indeed for God's sake.

The pain of loss that we feel helps us to think of what was borne and yielded up for our sake. So thankfulness is deepened for the love that does not change. It is little that we can offer; but it is all we have; and we bless God that He accepts what our hearts lay before Him. Moreover, our suffering is for the sake of the Christ within us, that the Divine life may spread its influence and take the place of that which is in its nature perishing. It is indeed for our own sakes, to perfect us in the likeness of Him from whose love nothing shall separate us. Death and what leads to death do not overcome us. We can already rejoice in Him who giveth us the victory, though He lead us to it by the way of the cross.

"*Whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I show the salvation of God.*" Ps. l. 23.

GOD is a Spirit; and unless our spirits draw nigh to Him all that our lips say or our hands bring is of no worth. We do Him honour, when His grace rules our inward being and our outward life. We give Him glory, when we seek Him as living members of a living Christ, when we show our thankful faith in Christ's finished sacrifice by pleading it, and when we go forth strong in the power of Christ living in us.

Praise has to do with what is yet future, as well as with what is already ours. We glorify God when, looking forward to being glorified at last, we learn from Him the way that leads to full salvation, and go on in that way steadfastly. Christ is the Way. We know Him now by faith; and made one with Him by the Holy Spirit's power, we are led nearer to God, and are borne onward till we reach the presence of His glory. What less dare we offer, and what more can we offer, than this offering of "ourselves, our souls and bodies," in union with our Saviour and His work? Thus the purifying of our natures goes on, and God's grace has its way. Thus our light shines forth more before men, and leads them to glorify our Father whose nature imparted to us is manifested.

We love Him who has first loved us, yielding to the gentle power with which He comes, and turning from each rival. We trust Him, giving no ear to the tempters who make false promises of good. We leave ourselves in His hands, to be guided and blessed as He wills, and we bow our own thoughts to His sure knowledge of what is true and good. So we are in the safe way to bring glory to our God, and to find ever new cause to bless Him for the fulfilment of His word. We glorify Him more in our hearts, as we become more the triumphs of His grace, in whom He glories. When we depart in peace, having seen by faith that salvation as our light and life, the veil shall be withdrawn; and the last remains of what makes us unable and unfit to see God shall pass away. In the glory of the Holy Land where no sin comes we shall be safe for ever. We shall know, in His Presence, the love of Him who has saved us to the uttermost, and shall know the worth of His finished salvation.

"When I cry unto Thee, then shall mine enemies turn back: this I know; for God is for me."—Ps. lvi. 9.

WHAT God does is the outgoing of His nature. If we know Him, we are sure how He will act. He draws nigh as the God whose Name is Love. That is the character in which we can learn and tell of Him. So far as we welcome His love and take it into our nature, we are able to know Him. He is loving unto every man; He wills and seeks the good of all. But He is indeed a God *for* those who are *for* Him. When we hear His call and put ourselves on His side the whole might of the Almighty stands between us and harm. Over and above what all His creatures feel, is that love with which He meets the faith of those who love Him. It never turns away: it is always coming forth in new forms of blessing, as we need and as we pray.

As our knowledge of God enlarges our hope of good, so the manifold good that comes gives more meaning to the Name of God. By seeking we find God, and the door opens that we may pass in nearer to Him and may feel more sure that we indeed have Him as our God. We ought not to keep Him waiting for the cry that tells of our need and of our trust. We ought not to strive sadly and feebly in our own strength, till we are almost overthrown and much ground has been lost. Our cry should be quick, that God may be with us, and that we may know Him with us, as we move steadily on through all that stands up to stop our way. We ought to let no foe close upon us, while our faith in God is unready. We ought to lay hold on the sure help near, so that in God's Name we may drive back evil while it is still far off.

So long as we are here, still going through a world of foes, and with a nature not yet all brought under the rule of God, we need to watch unto prayer. The first rising up of evil within us, the first sign of that which is against our souls and God, is a call to prompt prayer and prompt use of the might that prayer brings. Thanks be to God, we know God, and we know that He will not fail us. Hard conflict may be forced on us, but it will not last long. How great our joy in the God who proves Himself our God by making us more than conquerors! How great our joy to know that to save us is the joy of God!

"O God, Thou art my God; early will I seek Thee."
Ps. lxiii. 1.

THIS psalm was always used in the morning worship of the early Church. Like David in the desert of Ziph, with God his one sure hope, so is the Church of Christ in the wilderness of this world. And each soul can use the words of faith and prayer which the Church has learned from the prophet king. There is a God, whose might and goodness we trace in His works, and who has made men glad with His grace.

We share the tender mercies which are over all. But this is not enough for us, or for God. God asks a faith which will meet lovingly the thought which He has for each one. When we can say "Thou art my God" there need be no more want or fear. The words mean that we feel and own God's claim on us, and that we are sure of the claim on Him which His mercy gives. God does not divide Himself. The whole strength of His love and power to bless are for each one. All that God is, all that He can and will do, is for our sake: all things are ours, if He who made heaven and earth be our God indeed. He who spared not His own Son, will with Him freely give us all things.

We can face the loneliness and dangers of the wilderness, while this God is ours. Though we have found Him, still there is more to find out; there is ever need of fresh seeking. Well for us if we have sought God in the early days of life, so that He has had the first of our hearts and of our strength, and has taught us what is truly good, before the world deceived us with false promises. Well for us if we are in earnest now to lose no time, but to let God cheer and brighten all our life. Well for us if we so feel God to be our God that our earliest waking thought is of Him. Well to have it a settled daily habit to let God be beforehand with all else, to draw nigh to Him with thought and heart, and put our wills into His hands and seek His grace; so that we may go forth to the world's work and care in the strength of God. We seek God early, lest He be a lost God for ever. We seek Him early each day, lest He be hard to find when the quiet hours are past. We seek God in His own appointed ways, lest we lose time by acting on our own wilful fancies, and miss any of all the good that is for us in our God.

"He setteth the solitary in families: He bringeth out those who are bound with chains."—Ps. lxviii. 6.

GOD saved His people out of Egypt. He gave them shade by the way, and, to the faithful, homes in the Holy Land. He led them forth to be free. Had they trusted Him, He would have brought them safely by a short way. He deals with us now as He did with Israel. Those who forsake and doubt Him lose His help. They are lonely, parted from God in a barren and dry land. They wander where the streams of Divine grace do not flow, and they are unrefreshed. Apart from the Church of God, they go through the wilderness without the promise of God's care and cheer.

It is not good for man to be alone. From God come all the brightness and the peace of the homes in which His blessing dwells. The love for one another and for Him, of which His love is the source, gives life a quiet joy. None need feel solitary who can hold communion with God, and for His sake show loving-kindness to those around. There is a special promise to those who have left friends and home, choosing loneliness in order to be more free to serve Christ. He gives manifold more, even in this world. His Presence and His favour make a home of rest. In the fellowship of those near to Him the want of all we part from is more than made up; and where our spiritual kindred gather in our Father's home on high we look to find our place at last.

We have passed the Red Sea, and the waters of Baptism have closed between us and our old state of slavery. We have been delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. We are not yet used to our free life. Perhaps we have in heart turned back. The marks of the chains tell of what we have been, and the habits of the slaves of sin are not at once cast off. But God, who has brought us forth so far, leads us still, and has promised to lead us to the end. Whatever chain of evil we still feel to hold and gall us, He will loose. However fast we may feel bound by long habit, He can set us free. However heavy laden we are, He can lift our load away, that we may follow Him with glad, unfettered heart. Our weariness is a claim on His merciful help. He gives to those who welcome Him a love which makes His yoke easy and His burden light.

"*I will go in the strength of the Lord God: I will make mention of Thy righteousness only.*"—Ps. lxxi. 16.

WE are saved by hope. We hope in One whom we know and trust; so we wait in patience for hope's full reward. As we pass from goal to goal, there is still store of good to hope for. Each rescue and each gift that calls for praise makes hope stronger. When we go from this state of training to the rest and the glory, nothing shall check the great confidence of hope. All the day of our time here, and all the day of the endless hereafter, we have a theme of praise in the righteous acts of the faithful God and His ways of love in working out our salvation. No tongue can tell them all; we "know not the numbers." As we learn to look for them and gain the habit of praise, we find how much we ought to thank God and how sure a hope He is.

The strength of the Lord God, the might shown in His works, rises before us, shaming down the misgivings of our hearts and bidding us make our boast in the Lord. We tell His triumphs to ourselves, we speak of them in our worship. We praise God among men, giving Him new honour as He puts forth His strength in new ways. We remind ourselves of God's righteousness, to cheer us with fresh hope, and to throw new spirit into our songs of fearless confidence in the Almighty. It is a "righteous thing with God," the "holy and true," to judge the prince of this world and break his power, giving "rest" for ever to those who suffer for righteousness' sake.

What strength has God shown in lifting man from his fall, and in making a way of salvation for a lost world! How the Incarnation and the Cross tell of the love that shows its care for the sinner in its jealous condemnation of sin! How full is the story of the world and the Church of the works of Him who will by no means clear the guilty, and yet is faithful and just to forgive and cleanse all who seek Him with lowly and true heart! What a great cloud of witnesses declare the works of God in them and for them, cheering us while we look to the same Saviour and press towards the same prize! God is strong, and God is true. We can be strong in Him. We can hope to the end, committing the keeping of our souls to Him in that well-doing for which He has promised to enable us.

"*In Judah is God known: His Name is great in Israel. In Salem also is His tabernacle, and His dwelling-place in Zion.*"—Ps. lxxvi. 1, 2.

MEN who know not God indeed, and who in works deny Him, may yet own His greatness. To know about God is not to know Him. They are not all Israel who are of the Israel that glorifies the Name of God. What God does is meant to draw us to seek His presence that He may make Himself known. Those who are known of God, to whose willing true hearts He comes near as a friend and a father, learn what the Almighty is. Much must be still out of reach of any finite being; but there is a knowledge which, though in part, is true, and is enough for our needs now. Man is not God, and is not in heaven; but he may know God as far as it is good for man on earth to know Him.

God pitched His tent in Salem, and on Mount Zion He bade men build Him a tent to dwell in. Thither men were called to bring their worship and gain blessing. Israel need not envy Judah now; for God dwells in His Church through the whole world. We can all know Him in Christ, and show His praise in what through His grace we become. Great is His Name among us, as we see in clearer light and enjoy a nearer presence than was given in old time. We are come to the heavenly Jerusalem, and have our part in her grace and triumphs. God is made known in Christ, who is Emmanuel, God with us always.

With holy gladness we prepare our hearts, that God may come and make us meet for His abode. The works of grace, which tell how great He is, arouse our thankful praise. We can abide in communion with the Worker, and find rest for our souls. Where the Lord is there is Salem; peace awaits us in the shelter that He gives. From His dwelling He watches to launch forth His strength in our defence. Our peace begins when we seek God, that He may win our trust, may guard us from evil, and may keep us firm on His side against what spoils our peace. We pray for the peace of those who know God as a Father in Christ, who call on Him with no doubt, who leave their cause in His hands, and who look forward to the peace which shall be enjoyed in heaven by those whom God trains on earth.

"*Give ear, O Thou Shepherd of Israel, Thou that leadest Joseph like a flock; Thou that dwellest between the Cherubims, shine forth.*"—Ps. lxxx. 1.

GOD led His flock out of Egypt, and cared for them through the long desert way. He provided for their wants, He stood between them and their foes. His ear was open at all times, even when their sin had brought them low. The signs of His presence over the mercy-seat, where the golden cherubin spread their wings, told that their God was at hand, waiting to be gracious. He had but to show Himself, removing that which veiled the Presence ever ready to break forth, and His flock was safe.

We look to Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd, who gave His life for His sheep, and who leads the spiritual Israel to the Holy Land. We are in no peril while we follow where His steps are seen. Who can pluck us out of His strong hand? He brings near the might and goodness of Him who gave to each created being whatever powers it has. He has never let any go free to act apart from the Divine control. What can we lack who are the care of Him who owns and commands all the resources of His creation? The mercy-seat is within our reach. The Name by which we call Him, the mercies in the past of which the Name reminds, the outward pledges of the claim upon Him which His mercy grants, all make our prayer full of faith and hope and love.

Though the way be long and hard, if it be that by which the Shepherd leads us, it will bring us at last where we would be. He knows where dangers lie, and through what hardships we must be led if we would gain the safe fold of rest. We may have strayed far; but if we feel within us a longing to hear the Shepherd's voice that it may guide us, we are not too far away for His ear to catch our cry. He goeth after that which is lost until He find it. He whose place is in the highest heaven makes His dwelling among men. He has bought us with His own life, and knows each sheep by name, and calls it after Him as His own. Our prayer is but an answer to His voice. We are sure of what He is. Only let Him lead us onward now, and nourish and refresh us, and save us day by day. When He has brought us home, we shall know the love that has blessed us in all our way.

"Teach me Thy way, O Lord, and I will walk in Thy truth: unite my heart to fear Thy Name."—Ps. lxxxvi. 11.

IT is not enough to know the way in which the will of God would have us go. We need to pray that our own wills may seek the same ends, and yield to be led on towards them. As faithful disciples we learn to trust our Master. We look to Him for light and help, that we may see our path and be strengthened for each step. We walk in His truth, sure that while we do His bidding we have His grace; and that while we are in His way we escape the dangers and find the good of which His true word tells. We are apt to be drawn aside in unbelief to follow our own ways, and be half-hearted seekers after God's reward. We often try to serve two lords; we forget that the love of God which makes Him patient with us, also makes Him brook no rivals.

Only so far as we are pure in heart, seeking Him with single guileless aim, do we meet with welcome. We can mourn frankly how we are drawn aside. We can be guileless in wishing and striving and praying to be true. The prayer "Unite my heart to fear Thy Name" expresses our longing for that true steadiness of aim in which we feel that we fall short. We disown the claim of whatever power might ask to be heard instead of God. We turn from all that we might be tempted to fear or love more than Him. We lay before God our heart, out of which are the issues of life, the outgoings of our being when it chooses and acts. We pray Him to gather up and make His own all that reaches out towards various aims and objects of desire, so that it may be bent to the one purpose of showing thankful loving reverence.

Holy fear must be a part of love such as fallen and redeemed men should offer to their God. Fear must be in those who learn aright what the love of God is. It brings us to seek the shelter and the hope which His glory and holiness alone can give. As His Name means more to us, as we know Him better, we fear more to grieve and to part from Him; we grow more watchful lest we fail to rise to all that His love and greatness claim. He who worketh in us to will and to do of His good pleasure is God. We do well to fear and tremble, even while with loving joy and sure hope we work out our salvation. His good pleasure is our salvation.

"*O satisfy us early with Thy mercy; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. Make us glad according to the days wherein Thou hast afflicted us.*"—Ps. xc. 14, 15.

IT is night now on earth, compared with the glad pure brightness of the day that will break soon. The lives of all are darkened in a world of sin and death. Even those who have learned best how to walk by faith and go on in hope can tell of the heavy shadows that fall upon their path. There are the griefs and cares from which none are wholly free. There are the temptings of the powers of darkness, and the risings of indwelling sin. There is the anxious feeling after truth hidden among falsehoods and half-truths.

We long and pray for more light to help and cheer us till the day dawns. Then mercy shall show itself with no restraint; for there shall be no longer any need to try faith by withholding consolations, and to discipline the soul in patience. We then may know what have been the ways of mercy, and can enjoy in full the good to which those ways have led. The soul shall be satisfied when the work of mercy is done, and it has gained the holiness and the strength and the inner light which will fit it to live in the light of God.

The days of those who can welcome that morning are for everlasting. There shall be no night where souls are satisfied, having all that Divine mercy gives. Blessed are we if we mourn now, feeling aright about the sorrows of life and the manifold evil which tries us. The weary pilgrim and the worn out toiler value rest. He who has fought hard with sin and felt the violence of temptation knows the worth of peace. The light gladdens most those who have endured through the longest, darkest night. They who have struggled to know in faith, and to live on in hope, rejoice with keenest joy when they see what they have believed in and realise more than they have dared to hope for. God's mercy does not fail us even now. We have what God knows it is most merciful to give. We rejoice in the Lord, patient while our tribulation lasts, thankful for the mercy that helps and cheers us, hoping for the perfect good which will come when we are ready for it. We marvel what that eternal gladness will be, of which we have a pledge in each sorrow and a foretaste in each consolation.

"*To-day if ye will hear His voice.*"—Ps. xcv. 7.

GOD'S voice has never left man without witness of Divine rights in him and Divine care for him. In the wonders of creation and in the rule of Providence His power and Godhead have been made known. We have more than these. We have more than the clear voice that spoke from Sinai and shook the earth. God has in these last days spoken unto us by His Son. Christ, who is the Word of God, makes known to us the thought and the love which are to us-ward. The workings of the Spirit in the Church and His pleadings within our spirits tell of God's longing to be known as our God.

God's sheep hear His voice; their will is towards Him, waiting to know what He will say to their souls and by what way He is pleased to lead them out. To hear does not mean only to listen in order to know what He says, but to listen prepared to do at once, with glad will, what He says, and to follow where He calls. We may hear but not heed; we may hear loud plain tones, so as to be now and then startled or moved for a while, but lose the influence of the Divine Person who is ever near us through His voice. We may listen with interest with the outward ear, and yet be in our spirits deaf, so as to be out of reach of the power of the Divine Shepherd's call. What if we go so far from Him who speaks that it is as if He spoke not! What if we have trained ourselves to inattention, or grown bold in indifference! What if other voices which draw us from Him are more welcome! What if we listen to so many, that His voice is drowned! What if the voice which our hearts send back is a cold refusal to obey, or an indolent putting Him off!

The day of grace is only for a while; the night cometh. While it is called to-day we are promised all that infinite love can do and give. But we are not promised a to-morrow in which we may choose to hear the voice of love and refuse to hear the sentence of judgment. No wonder love is earnest in pleading with us to hear now. There is a warning voice to check our straying wills; a voice of promise to cheer us when our hearts misgive; a guiding voice to lead us onward in the sure safe path; a voice of comfort to soothe us with the peace of God; a voice that teaches us truth; a voice that tells of grace surely given for all our growing changing need.

"*Thou art the same, and Thy years shall have no end. The children of Thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before Thee.*"—Ps. cii. 27, 28.

THE passage is quoted of Christ as God (Heb. i. 10–12). God is from everlasting to everlasting. He makes Himself known in changing ways as the needs of His creatures change. But He is the same God always. He gives to all that He has made a use and a time. He can at His will give them new work, or bid them be no more. The worlds that now are rose out of what was without form and void. So we look for new heavens and a new earth, in which the new race of changed men shall have their place prepared.

God lived before us and before all that we see; He will live to keep His word, when heaven and earth have passed away. We may leave our place and work here, but His work goes on. We can live and die in faith, sure that what we know not now we shall know hereafter. In His Church we have our place here for a while. As His servants we serve Him, though we see Him not, and wait to be called where we can serve Him and see His face. We are the spiritual children of those whom Christ first drew after Him. When we are gone, others who learn the truth and gain the grace of Christ shall hand on our inheritance of privilege and duty, till the last soul reaches home.

So the Church is for ever, as God is. Like the heavens and the earth it shall be changed. We change one by one, as we pass from toil to rest, where God is seen and known. Not in this life, perhaps, shall we share the triumph of Christ's cause. But this does not mean that others who come after us shall enjoy what we strive and pray for but shall never see. Rather, when the world with its confusion, and the Church on earth in its weakness, can be looked on by us from a higher state, we shall know more of God's great scheme; we shall read more plainly the movements of those powers of heaven and earth over which God keeps control. And when Christ comes in His glory, and all things are put under His feet, we shall rejoice with all the generations of His servants who have done their part well in the place which God gave them. We shall know then why faith and hope could only live on by the help of so much effort in seeking and using grace.

"*He is the Lord our God: His judgments are in all the earth.*"
Ps. cv. 7.

GOD chose Abraham to be His servant, that he and those who should spring from him might keep alive in the world the knowledge of the Divine truth and will. The treasure was entrusted to the family of Abraham to be stored and distributed. The light was handed to them which was to be kept burning till the Sun of Righteousness should arise. There was a purpose of special love to those who were thus called. But it reached farther. What they had was a high and solemn trust, meant to spread blessing over all the world and throughout all time.

Well might one of God's ancient people bow his head in wondering awe at the thought of the favour which his race enjoyed; well might he thank God and take courage; well might he fear while, looking back on Israel's history, he said to himself, "He is the Lord our God who has done all this!" And what of us, God's spiritual Israel, called to a higher knowledge and the enjoyment of a holier presence? How can we think aright of all our privileges? How can we rise to a due feeling of our duty and our hope? We are tempted to ask if all can indeed be true.

God is the Saviour of all men; caring for even those who know Him not, and for those who know of Him and are yet unthankful. He has written His rule of right and wrong with more or less plainness on the consciences of men. He has made the whole world of Nature a book where men may read His wisdom and His goodness. In the course of the world's history there are plain marks of an overruling guiding power. But God is specially the Saviour of them that believe. He has ranked us among those who are called to the knowledge of His grace and faith in Him. We are baptized into Christ, and so are in union with Christ in the fruit of all His work. He whose will rules the nations of the earth, who can set up and cast down whom He will, is our God, and we are His people. He is ours to seek and find and know. He is ours to call upon in prayer, and to praise as the Giver of all our good. He is ours to glory in and to make known abroad as One whose will it is that the kingdoms of this world should become the kingdom of our God and of His Christ.

"*He satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.*"—Ps. cvii. 9.

THE words have a full meaning only when understood of spiritual things. What is of this world, even of what God gives and is in itself good, meets one want or another for a time, but cannot be enough for man's immortal self. Perhaps we hardly know why the desires within us are so painful, or can say clearly what it is we want. We feel our souls' need more when some great hope of this world has failed, and all around seems a dried-up desert in which we have lost our way. Well for us if then we learn to look upward and to long for God and for His grace, that we may have the blessing which those enjoy whom He fills with Divine good. He makes the world where we are a wilderness, that we may ask after Him and find enough.

It is well when the direction of our longings is made right, when we hunger for what God gives, and for what God is. He alone can satisfy those who are made in His image, and have the large desires of those whose home is heaven. We shall not have in full that of which He tells us, till the redemption of our whole nature is perfected, and we are conformed to the image of His Son. Our desires then will be enlarged to receive the larger satisfaction provided. But even now He gives rest to the soul that waits to receive and take up into itself what He has taught it to hunger for. We can have what changes the painful craving of the empty soul into a longing, full of joy and hope, for that of which a blessed earnest has been bestowed. We can have a feast of good things which are never exhausted and never pall, but which prepare us ever for greater and more perfect good.

We are blessed when we know indeed that it is God, the good One, and the source of all good, who is Himself the satisfaction of our needs. All that comes to us of His goodness is meant to lead us to Him. Coming to Him through Christ, living in union with Him through Christ, looking up ever to Him in faith, and drawing from Him grace which we use and put forth in our life, we become more and more satisfied with God. Christ who is our Righteousness satisfies the holy hunger and thirst of our souls, till we know what He is to souls freed from all desires that do not seek their rest in Him.

"*He shall drink of the brook in the way: therefore shall He lift up the head.*"—Ps. cx. 7.

CHRIST had a baptism to be baptized with, and He was straitened till it was accomplished. Jehovah was at the right hand of the Son of Man as He fought on, and in spite of wounds, shattered the throne of the prince of this world. Whatever refreshment He had was for that work's sake. He sought it that He might pass on His way with new strength. And when all was finished, the head bowed on the cross was lifted up. Obedient unto death, He laid down His life, and He by His own act took it again in glory.

The war with sin goes on still. And Christ, in His Church and in each soul, repeats His course, that He may repeat His triumph. As He was in the world, so must we be, if we would have Him with us and be at last with Him. We must persevere with courage and self-denial, if we would reach the end of the way with joy, and share His victory. We must love not the world, but use it as not using it to the full. So shall we be masters of ourselves, and free to seek higher things. We must endure hardness, that we may prove good soldiers of Jesus Christ and may lift up our heads even now, wearing the helmet which is the hope of salvation. There is a mysterious but true way in which He shares the persecution of sin, the contradiction of sinners, the fight and watching and hard pressing on, that test our perseverance. While His members are suffering, the Head has not yet reached His perfect final glory. Like S. Paul, each of us fills up what is behind in the sufferings of Christ.

Thus a new meaning and sacredness are given to all we bear. Our cross is indeed His. He feels it as His own. He goes with us and is in us through all. So we dare not shrink or falter or hold back, for Christ in us is the hope of glory. We dare not rebel against what He endures patiently. If the strife seem very sore, we know that we ought to rejoice and lift up our heads, taking this as a sign that our redemption draweth nigh, when He shall be glorified in us. We look on all the world's good things as refreshment for pilgrims passing through a land of foes. Enjoyment of these is not the end of life. We taste them thankfully in the way, waiting humbly upon God till in due time He exalt us.

"*I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the Name of the Lord.*"—Ps. cxvi. 13.

WE owe our being to God. What we are in power of body or mind is from Him. He has moreover made us able to know Him and hold communion with Him, and to live now so as to grow fit for a life with Him. The unspeakable gift of Christ has in it all good. All that it means of blessing is beyond our thoughts. Eternity shall unfold ever new treasures, as we grow able to use and to enjoy them. He who for our sakes was made flesh and died, lives for us and dwells in us. He has taken us into union with His own life. He gives Himself to nourish and cheer our souls, and He is in us the hope of glory.

What shall we render unto the Lord, from whom come our natural and spiritual life, with all that sustains and blesses them? We cannot offer less than all we are and all that we can do. We have nothing that is not God's already. We can do nothing that is not His right. We can only take care that as we live by Him, we live for Him. The sense of the love that blesses us makes our service freedom. We ask, not what we must, but what we can do. We please God by yielding to the influences of His grace, and letting Divine love work a perfect work in us. We give our Father the best return for His benefits, by becoming what He aims to make us.

Christ drank the cup of suffering to gain for us salvation. He would have us make our own, with thankful faith and ready will, the benefits of His work and death. To reach the joy set before us we may have, like Christ, to drink of a cup filled with grief. Fellowship with Him in His sufferings is needful for those who would share His glory. The thankful love which His love arouses, and which leads to a life of holy obedience, assures of His good work going on in us. Moved by God's goodness, we ask how we can draw most fully upon that grace which saves from sin and strengthens in holiness. We value above all, those means of grace in which we are brought closest to our Lord, and find His coming most real. We glorify and praise God by calling upon His Name. Thus we show our faith in Him who makes Himself wonderfully known to us, and we prove our value for those benefits which tell us of the unchanging goodness of the eternal God.

"Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken Thou me in Thy way."—Ps. cxix. 37.

IN one sense all that is of this world is vanity; for the world passeth away. By vanity seems meant here all which by deceitful outward look tends to draw away the heart and turn aside the will and strength from their true aim. All things are vanity which have not in them that by which God makes even common earthly good real and helpful. All things are vanity in which good is sought apart from God, and which are used without His blessing on them. Through the eyes outward things reach and lay hold on the heart. What is pleasant to the eyes attracts us; we are tempted to forget all but our desire, and to put forth the hand and take it and make it ours.

Conscience is soon dulled by the glare of the bright vain things on which we let ourselves look with longing. The inward eye, which ought to be always quick to discern between good and evil, better and best, grows dim and blind, if the outward eye is allowed to gaze on vanity. That inlet to the soul must be guarded with jealous care, lest when the eye wander, the heart go with it, and the feet leave the path of salvation. But we are in the midst of a vain world, and our own hearts are vain and ready to be deceived. How shall we know at once what to turn away from, and how shall we be able to stop the force of temptation?

We call on God to keep us that we may look on nothing evil, and on nothing harmless so as to desire it wrongly. Our hope is in looking unto Jesus, turning from all else to Him, seeing all things in the light of His presence. Is any joy of longing or of possession worth the loss of Him? If our eye offend, we dare not shrink from any self-denial. That which hinders, though in itself harmless, becomes sin to us. If we linger over it, we are in danger of losing our way, and losing life for the sake of it. We turn from it, and we ask to be quickened in God's way. Christ is the Way; He shows us how to go forward; He bids us come to Him and abide in Him, that He may bear us onward. He quickens us with His own life, and for the vanities that tempt and betray gives perfect and everlasting good.

"*Uphold me according unto Thy word, that I may live: and let me not be ashamed of my hope.*"—Ps. cxix. 116.

OUR hope is in God. He will not fail those for whose faith He asks. He will care for the life which He has given. He has not spared His own Son; and with Him will freely give all things needful to make the blessings of that unspeakable gift fully ours. He has shown us His truth and His will; we shall not be left without the grace to enable us to live in faith and obedience to the end. Great is the worth of this hope; for it is a hope of life in all the full meaning of the word. The hope of the hypocrite shall perish. The hope of him who trusts in himself ends in shame. Our hope is to be perfect and complete in all the will of God. We have a right to that hope only so far as we are striving to be now one in will with God.

It is hard to keep the end in view, while in the midst of so much that would draw our heart away. It is hard to press on without stumbling. It is hard to live as those who belong to a world where there is no death or sin. We are afraid when we think of those who resist God openly, and of those who forget and are not "with" Him, "gathering" in His service. We dread lest we be of their number, and so lose all that God has done for us. But this fear makes us prize more dearly the word of God's promise. We plead it in our prayers; we plead it by living and acting in all ways in the confidence of it.

We resist evil boldly, sure of the word which has promised help. We undertake work beyond our own human strength, not doubting that God will be with us, and that the needful grace will be forthcoming. We meet temptations and trials, in humble but quiet trust that God has spoken, and that it is not His will that our strength sink or our life fail. We ask Him to uphold us, and we go forth in the might of the Lord God. We live by Christ living in us. He gave Himself for us, and He made His eternal life one with ours, when we were by His Holy Spirit made His members. He wills to carry on His good work. His life shows itself wherever it is. If we have it indeed, our life will be Christ-like, and glorify Him who works in us to will and to do. If we "have passed from death unto life," and if to us "to live is Christ," death shall be everlasting gain and glory beyond our highest hope.

"The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore."—Ps. cxxi. 8.

ALWAYS the Church is Christ's Church, and in all she does and is she is never left to live and act and suffer by herself. In all she does when she goes forth to her divinely-given tasks, and in all her quiet times of retirement and devotion, the Lord shows Himself her Saviour. Through all the days, till she is with Him where He is on high, He is with her where she is in the unrest and struggle of her life on earth. She may seem to slumber; but He who keeps her for His own work does not; and it is often well that even rough means should rouse her to a remembrance of her high calling. God's promise is for evermore, and it is those things which are for evermore that He undertakes to guard.

We are all interested in the Church's well-being; for it is as members of the Body of Christ, which she is, that we are partakers of Christ. One with Him, we are God's adopted; and share, in right of our new birth, the blessings and hopes which are the inheritance of God's children. God guards the Church for our sake, and He guards us that each one of us may do his part for the fulfilling of the Church's mission. We go out and come in, and few care what we do, or where we go, or what becomes of us; but we are, in our whole life and in all the details of it, an interest to the Almighty. He watches over us when we go forth to our work, and have to face the temptings of an evil world, and meet the cares that make up so large a part of the busy life of man. He is with us when, tired and heartsore, we seek the shelter of home. He draws us to His house of prayer, and leaves us not when we go out reinforced by grace, to the honourable toil and the holy war which life is.

We are His, whom He has made His own; and He is our God, whose great love and might are active for us always. Whatsoever we do in word or deed we can do in the Name of the Lord Jesus, as members of Him; and we know that we can live to the glory of God in every part of our daily life. God wills to have us now in His keeping; He takes us now into that strong and loving care which shall be felt in all its blessedness when we go out and come in before Him in the land of peace.

"I will abundantly bless her provision: I will satisfy her poor with bread."—Ps. cxxxii. 15.

GOD comes to all, and dwells where He is welcomed. Where He dwells He blesses. The life is more than meat, and the Giver of life does not withhold what is wanting to sustain it. He teaches us to lay our wants before Him, that we may keep in mind our dependence on Him, and that what we have may come to us with His blessing. He gives the daily bread for which we pray, enabling us to gain all things needful for soul and body. If we seek first the things that nourish and strengthen our soul's life, the rest shall be added.

God's laws show the true way of prosperity for this world, as well as for that which is to come. Godliness keeps from much that hinders prosperity and spoils the joy of earthly good. It is a way to much profit, and it helps to content and hope in a lowly lot. God stored in His Church of old what the souls of His people needed. But they did not dream of such bounties as are ready for us now. The Bread of God cometh down from heaven like the daily manna; and the poorest can take freely, without money and without price. Christ is that Bread. He gives Himself. Our life becomes one with His life, which is the everlasting life of God. If we believe in Him, obeying Him and seeking His grace as He tells us, we shall never want what our souls need.

In one sense, it is true, we must hunger, feeling poor and unable to provide for ourselves, hungering and thirsting after righteousness. So He fills us with good things, and enables us to go on in the strength of the heavenly food. All the ministrations of Christ's Church are means by which our union with God in Christ is kept up. In manifold ways our daily bread is given. One is above all others; for in that Christ takes bread and blesses it to be provision for our souls. He says of it, "This is My body;" and He declares, "He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood dwelleth in Me, and I in Him." Thus He becomes our food, with Divine power to strengthen and to make immortal. He gives not something that He has, but all that He is. We are satisfied from day to day; but as He gives us larger desire and power to receive Him, He comes with ever larger bountifulness.

"I will praise Thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made."—Ps. cxxxix. 14.

GOD made us, and He does not let go or forget what He has formed. Our bodies are built up of common things, such as float in the air and lie around by the wayside and in the fields. We cannot tell, but God knows, how they have been brought together and made parts of one being. We cannot explain the ceaseless waste and growth of our bodies, the way in which out of like material the various organs are formed, how the eye is made to see and the ear to hear, and how each fits into its place with the rest.

Even looked at as the body of Adam was before God breathed into him the breath of life, how wonderful man's body is! But there is yet more to humble and amaze us when we trace the movements of life. What is it? Where is it? How does it quicken the body and make all the parts of the body act together and for one another? What is that which, as soon as it goes, leaves the body at the mercy of powers which turn it into dust and gases? How is it that the mind and the body act on each other, so that they are indeed one, although apart? What is the nature of the spirit which dwells in this earthly tabernacle now, and has such strange powers of holding communion with God? How far do we stand alone, and how far do we bear the mark of those who have gone before us, showing strength or weakness, having helps or hindrances which we owe to them?

It was in a nature such as ours that the Son of God lived. A reasonable soul and human flesh such as ours made up that which He took to be part of Himself. He had no sin; and as He did His Father's business He trained to its perfection His holy manhood. So He has learned in His own experience the ways of our life, and He calls us to live as He lived, under the watchful care of a God who knows us. For what high and great ends must this nature of ours be meant? What shall be the work given it in the glorified state for which this is the preparation? As Christ was made like us on earth, so do we hope to be made like Him where He is now. We will praise Him for the powers which He has given us, which are but the promise of others which shall fit us for the high employments of a higher world.

"*I will extol Thee, my God, O King; and I will bless Thy Name for ever and ever.*"—Ps. cxlv. 1.

ALL things that God has made tell His praise. More or less plainly they show His wisdom and power and goodness. We alone of all beings upon earth know Him as our God, and can bless His Name, giving Him the homage of mind and heart and will. God has not given us the power to know Him fully; we are men and not God. None can add to the glory of Him who is in all things perfect. We can take our part in making known His praise. He is our God, the God of each. He has made us; we are His, and to Him we look with a creature's trust for all we need. We extol Him in those countless ways by which we own His claim on us, and plead the claim which through His mercy we have on Him. We praise Him best when, in what we are and what we are able by His grace to do, we "walk worthy of God." We glorify Him, when our lives do Him homage and we show ourselves faithful subjects of His spiritual kingdom.

We have learned what God has done in the past, our fathers have told us of His works of power. Each generation as it passes finds Him the same God, and has new proof of His right to be honoured. God is for ever, and His Name shall for ever come with fresh meaning, and be more and more a name to be blessed, as His might and greatness and love are searched out. We bless Him that we can look forward, as those who have eternal life in Christ. Our praise now is weak and poor; for we are weak, and as yet we know not much. We have to rouse ourselves to thought; we feel but coldly. When our failures shame us, we live in hope of sharing worship worthy of our God and King.

Meanwhile, let each day, as it brings us new knowledge of God, bring us also new will and power to magnify Him. How great must that God be in whose thought the worlds were planned, by whose will all things were formed! How great must that King be under whose rule all the powers of Nature move, who guides each man and the whole course of things to work out His ends! How great He shows Himself in the work of Christ and in all His dealings with His Church! Happy are we if we know Him as indeed our God and King, and feel His greatness to be our hope and glory!

"*Thou, O Lord, art a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head.*"—Ps. iii. 3.

FOES may be strong and many all around us; evil may beset our souls. We may be said to have left God, and to be cast off by Him. Yet we need not give up hope. Those who taunt us as forsaken, may know how unworthy and helpless we are; but they do not know the vast reach of God's mercy.

We can understand better than others the greatness of our sin and desolation of soul. We can also find out what Divine love is to those who cast themselves upon it. When in our need we turn to God, our faith finds Him a defence round about us on all sides. No darts of the wicked can do us hurt: for the Almighty is between us and whatever is aimed against us. He turns aside their sharp point, and quenches their flame so that they fall harmless. He gives that which we can lift up boldly in the thick of the hardest conflict. And when in lowly self-knowledge we feel how weak we are, still the Lord is our God. He bids us glory in Him, and He glorifies us with what is His own, even with Himself. Christ in us is a growing earnest, and a brightening hope of the glory to be revealed in us when we are manifested as the sons of God.

So we are not cast down; our thoughts rise heavenward, our hearts and our eyes look up. We fear not the hosts that seem to hem us in, or the long sore fight that our earthly pilgrimage must be. We are not dismayed by past falls, or by all that warns us how vain it is to trust in strength or armour of our own. All this but drives us back on the true and only strength, and warns of the one shelter.

We put on the helmet of salvation, and that gift of the protecting God in whom we trust enables us to go on in hope. Bravely and calmly we meet whatever comes. We look forward and press forward, watching always, fainting never. We are humble, and yet we glory in Him whose care and love ennoble us. We distrust self, and that makes our triumph more sure; for we look to Him who cannot fail. We have the peace of those who know that they are in the keeping of God. We persevere till He lifts up our head, when we are glorified together with Christ, and give glory to Him who has saved us.

"Thou that liftest me up from the gates of death, that I may show forth all Thy praise in the gates of the daughter of Zion."—Ps. ix. 13, 14.

WE think of death as the end of hope. When we once pass down through those dark gates, and they have shut behind us, there is no going back into the light again. Our work on earth is done, our place here is for ever empty, when sickness or decay has worn through the last links that held in one the body and the spirit. There is a worse death, of which this is but a figure; when the spirit, which little by little has lost its hold on God, goes loose from Him who is the Life, and drops into the grave from which none rise.

How often has God raised us when we seemed at the very gates of death, and brought us back to our place in the active life of the world! How often has His hand borne us safely past dangers! Has not all our life been a continual uplifting of that which, left alone, could only sink and decay?

And was not the beginning of our spiritual life a quickening of what was already in the grasp of death? We were fallen and perishing, but the life of the Saviour raised us. Born of water and the Spirit, "baptized into Christ," "risen together with Him," we were made one with Him who is alive for evermore and has opened the gates of everlasting life. We can lift up our hearts to the Lord, who bends over us and is our Saviour, raising us from the death of sin, and calling up in us fresh powers of a higher, purer life. Nay, we can feel that He lives in us, saving us by His own indwelling life. When we are tempted, He lifts us above the evil that would overwhelm us. When we fall, He reaches out the hand to hold us up lest we sink, and to place us once more where the living are. Always we owe all to His salvation, by which we stand, by which we rise. Always the glory of what is good and bright and hopeful is His alone. To Him we bring our joyful thanksgiving when we enter those gates of grace, which open to the earnest seekers after the life of God. We hope to praise Him better when we have passed through the everlasting doors into the presence of His glory in Jerusalem on high.

"*I have set the Lord always before me.*"—Ps. xvi. 8.

CHRIST came and lived to do His Father's business. He watched for all ways of doing His will. No tempting snare could draw Him from His straight onward course. No power of man, no warning of the Cross, could move the firmness of His purpose. However man hated Him He always saw the face of His Father. God was well pleased, and that was enough. However dark His earthly trial, His thoughts and His love were fixed on God. More than twelve legions of angels were ready to come at His call; and He saw before Him His Father's welcome when all was done.

The God of the man Christ Jesus is our God. In Christ we can look up to God as Christ did; God looks on us in Him. Christ is ready to be in us what He was for us. God is stronger than all that can be against us. He is for ever, while all good and evil that gladdens or darkens our earthly life must pass soon away. Faith can know of His guardian presence always. We set Him before us as our Lord, in whose way we must walk step by step, whom it must be our fixed aim to please. So we can also set Him before us as the light to cheer our path, as our sure Saviour, making all things help to the fulness of our joy. If He be on our right hand to rule us, He will nerve our right hand with strength for each hard duty and sore fight. The fiery darts of the wicked shall all be quenched if we can hold up the shield of faith in a God whose presence we always remember, in whose strength and for whose glory we aim to live. Our hope shall have so firm a hold on those things which draw our heart, that no attraction of evil or of the passing good which God sends to cheer us can move our will.

Thus shall our fear of God grow into a settled habit of doing all things with loving thought of Him. No cross shall seem too hard to bear, no task too irksome to fulfil. Once for all we have set the Lord before us. We dare not dare that power, or grieve that love on which we have cast ourselves. Always we need to think of Him, and always we need His thought of us. Only let us watch and pray that our faith fail not to keep us faithful. He will be more to us than we hope.

"*The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.*" Ps. xix. 9.

THERE is a fear which drives men to seek a hiding-place from God. There is a fear which drags them cowering before Him. Such fear is better than the dulness of the soul that neither fears nor loves. But the Psalmist speaks of that fear which shows itself in loving, willing, watchful effort to obey God's law so as to please God. It is a fear lest we sin, and so be parted from God.

This fear does not bewilder or distress. We are thankful that we are not left in ignorance and carelessness. This fear keeps us calmly on our guard, and leads to the peace of a state which is well defended. This fear, which keeps us thoughtful and lowly, keeps us ever in the felt presence of God and under the cleansing influence of His law.

The will of God does not change. The laws which He gives take new form, as circumstances change, but they have one spirit which is eternal. The fear in man which that will calms, by guiding it to right action, lasts on for ever even in heaven, and is perfected there. As we grow more to will what God wills, because God wills it, we ask with truer earnestness what He would have us do, that each wish and thought and word and act may be cleansed from imperfection. As we learn to live, meeting always the kind, holy eye of our Father, we love to be watched by Him, and it becomes part of our nature to be ruled in all things by His law. We see the rightness of His dealings, how true to His word He is.

God is with His law where the soul is ready to hear His voice and yield to His power in it. It cleanses from that which makes us wish to flee or hide from God. It gives order and purity, making us what God wills us to be. God writes it on our hearts by His Holy Spirit, and we are won to love it as it is shown to us in the perfect life and character of Jesus Christ. So it is more precious to us than the best earthly wealth, and brings us more enjoyment than the sweetest, purest earthly pleasure. However poor and tried our life may be, we can have the rich portion, even now, of those who fear God and are guided by His will; we can know that we are heirs of the everlasting good for which God trains His own.

"*Lead me in Thy truth, and teach me: for Thou art the God of my salvation; on Thee do I wait all the day.*"—Ps. xxv. 5.

IT is the voice of the Church in her time of trouble. She looks to God with eyes of steadfast faith, casting her care upon the faithful One, praying to be led safely till her trials are past and she goes forth free. It is the voice of the soul beset with dangers and temptations, aware of its blindness and weakness, strong in lowly trust in God.

We know that God is faithful, and that our trial is not more than the strength at hand. However thickly temptations may crowd against us, there is a way kept open by which we may escape. The trial is meant to work in us patience and make us perfect, wanting nothing that can help us to all spiritual joy. But we lack wisdom, and we ask it of God, that we may be taught how to work out the salvation which is His gift.

The words are good for all times. Though we cease to watch and pray, those who are against our souls do not cease to lie in wait to draw off our hearts from God. Every time is a time of temptation, and day by day our faith and our faithfulness are tried by new, hard tests. Our own ways are where the foolish wander after false promises of good, where cowards fly from the way of duty. Our own wills mislead till our pride is shamed by falls. God leads, for His own Name's sake, those who trust His Word. And as He leads us on, we learn from Him how to guide our steps, so as not to miss the path or stray into new perils.

Every time that we draw upon His help, fresh proof is given of His truth, and we gain more boldness of faith in our waiting on Him. We wait on Him in prayer; we wait on Him where He bids us seek Him, in the teachings of His Word, in the ministrations of His Church, in the Sacraments from which goes forth the living power of His Presence. And we wait on Him by lowly, earnest use of the light that He has given us in our minds and consciences. We think and do our best, under His eye and looking up to Him. He will not only make sure our escape from temptation by the way He opens, but will make the temptations means of grace; binding our faith more firmly to God, and helping us towards the salvation for which we wait on Him always.

"*Bow down Thine ear to me; deliver me speedily.*"—Ps. xxxi. 2.

GOD'S righteousness makes Him a sure hope. If we strive truly, however feebly, to be on the side of righteousness, we are working with One who will be true for ever to His cause and ours. So we praise God for the claim on Him which His mercy gives, and we pray with boldness for the help which is always ready. However we reach up in heart towards God, and our desires are lifted by His grace; still we are low, and our far-off state of unworthiness must make us lowly. He bids us ask Him to bow down His ear, and thus gives His word that He will draw nigh to listen. To each He bends, missing no one in the crowd, but hearing the tale of every heart's own bitterness and all for which it longs. God's kind ear catches the weakest breathing of the spirit which turns towards Him for help.

He who looked on fallen, helpless man, and stooped to meet the need which man knew not how to tell, is the same now. He is as near as ever, and through Him God is nigh, giving heed to all the wants of all praying souls. Enough to know that God hears: help is sure to come. He waits for us to ask, that thus we may be ready to take and use what He loves to give freely.

We ask Him to make speed to save us, declaring thus how deeply we feel our need and long to have God's help. Faith and hope make us ask for a quick answer; but faith reminds us also that God's way and time are always the best for doing all things. To us there may seem long delay, and our cry may be as if it were unheard. But we cannot watch the movements of the power of God, or trace how wisely the work of our deliverance goes on. If the prayer of our heart and life be true, God is becoming more and more our Rock and our Fortress.

It is not wrong to pray for peace and freedom from hard trial. This is but to own our weakness and self-distrust. But our salvation may be wrought, so as to be a fuller and more swift answer to our prayer, by God giving us a foremost place in fight and work for Him. So our soul's foes may be better known and more promptly worsted. We may gain more strength and mightier weapons of God to make our deliverance sure and glorious.

"*I will give thanks in the great congregation: I will praise Thee among much people.*"—PS. xxxv. 18.

CHRIST seemed alone, like a lamb among lions. There seemed none to help. God was silent, while all the varied powers of evil thronged against Him, repaying His good will with word and deed of malice. But He saw the end: He knew that God would judge His cause and bring the purpose of Divine love to pass. Already, even in His lowest humiliation, the glory to come was before Him, and He prepared to give God due praise. His death was to bear much fruit. From that sowing was to spring up the multitude who should share and show forth His risen life.

In the gifts poured out upon the Church now, Christ gives thanks to Him who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory. His work by the Holy Spirit in those whom He sends is to glorify God; and every member of the Church who lets his light shine, lives by the grace of the risen Christ to the praise of God. Among "much people," or the "heavy" people, or the "strong" people, Christ foresaw His work. To the weary and heavy laden He offers rest, bringing near God's love, and calling them to throw off sin's yoke and praise God in the perfect freedom of holiness. The strong in faith and perseverance gain and keep all the gifts which He has for them. Their natures grow in strength, and witness more perfectly to the work of God.

So we have our part in fulfilling the plan of Him whose members we are. Our lot may be one of trial, and may seem to be all humiliation. But it is not so if we are indeed in living union with the glorified Christ. In our patience and faith and hope, in the weariness we feel under the weight of sin, in the supernatural strength that upholds us, Christ gives thanks and praises God. Shall we not keep in mind for our cheer, that His triumph is ours, and ours His; that He thanks God for our sakes? Shall we not speak and live so as to make known the glory of Him to whose grace we owe all? How short and little shall our affliction seem when we praise and thank God among the great multitude that no man can number—the strong people, strong in the Lord—who have passed through much tribulation and are perfected for ever!

"*For I am a stranger with Thee, and a sojourner.*"
Ps. xxxix. 12.

THE saints of old believed God, and lived as strangers and pilgrims upon earth. "Wherefore God was not ashamed to be called their God," owning their rights in Him. They were not at home, and they did not try to make themselves at home; but showed plainly in word and deed that they sought a better country. Thus they claimed their part in God, at whose word they "went out not knowing whither."

We are called to live as strangers here, to be in the world yet not of it, to have our citizenship in heaven while our place is on earth. And we are warned not to rest, but to be ever moving onward till we find our home. So far as we obey the call and press forward where the light of God leads, we throw ourselves upon God. He at whose word we have come forth goes with us on our way, so that it may not be wearisome or lonely. We do not look for the love of those whose home is in a land where we are strangers. We are not surprised if they do not understand our ways of thought and feeling, or the language in which we speak. We are prepared to meet with scorn and hatred, if we are loyal to our King, whom they do not own as theirs. And we do not murmur, if we have more treasure where we are going, than in the place of our short sojourning through which we pass. We are ready to lay aside every weight, as well as the encumbering sin.

We are God's pilgrims, and He is with us. We hope to be with Him, which is far better. Meanwhile, our needs and sorrows cry to Him. The sinking of heart of the weary and heavy laden is indeed a coming to Him for the refreshment which He has ready. The shadow of a great rock, the cooling stream, the manna from on high, do not fail. God hears, and does not hold His peace. He speaks to our souls, saying, "I am thy salvation:" and His word is creative. He says, Let there be light, cheer, strength, holiness; and these things are. He gives the salvation of which He is the source. He saves us in each trial; he saves us from each sin. He becomes to us less a stranger and more a Father and a friend in Christ. We learn to know Him less as One to turn to now and then at stages or crises of our pilgrimage, and more as One who, while all else shifts and changes, alone is near and is the same always.

"*Thou art fairer than the children of men.*"—Ps. xlv. 2.

THE Church loves to picture the King who claims her as His own, and to whom she gives loving honour. Perfect God, He is perfect man. There is no least fault or flaw in any part. That human soul for which a body was formed by the Holy Spirit was the soul of the Son of God. How pure and fair that soul, when it first awoke to knowledge of itself and of things around! To what brightness it grew, as it used to the full its close fellowship with God and the training of its place in the world!

The virtue of His Godhead showed itself in the soul of Christ. Men had proof of its presence working in the body which their eyes saw. That form surely revealed something of Him whose life found outward expression by means of it. Moulded by the Spirit, it had no blemish: taking shape by the movements of the faultless life that quickened it, only the best and holiest influences had to do with its development. Christ was more marred than any man, for there was more to mar; and He was the man of sorrows. But no sickness ever made impure one drop of the blood that flowed through His veins and fed His body. No evil or ungodlike thought ever left a mark upon His face. Only what is highest and noblest stirred His features, and gave to them, little by little, the matured expression of the man. Close communion with His Father brought out more plainly in His human nature all that showed Him to be the Son of God.

What must have been the grace of movement of Him who was always natural as a child! What must have been the dignity and the holy winning power of His look, out of whose eyes looked the soul that was one with God! When that face turned towards men, must they not have seen some lingering sign of the glory that fell upon it when turned towards God? Christ was in all things the pattern in God's mind, when He said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness."

He Himself who rose from the dead is now upon the throne. Those who knew Him at Nazareth can know Him to be the same, like what He was then, but glorified. We think of Him who is the shining forth of the Father's glory, the image of the invisible God, when we try to put before us what God is like, and the likeness that we hope to wear.

"Have mercy upon me, O God, after Thy great goodness: according to the multitude of Thy mercies do away mine offences."—Ps. li. 1.

DAVID knew that he was not cast away. As soon as the words "Thou art the man" drew from him the heartfelt confession "I have sinned," the prophet said in God's name, "The Lord hath put away thy sin." Thus he was saved from despair. He was told of a God who would not leave his sin unpunished, yet who would not leave him in his sin. But David did not know at once how great and many his sins were, or what mercy he needed. Other sins had helped to make his soul sleep, and had grown and fastened upon him while he slept. These were shown in their true form and darkness to his opened eyes. God gave him light and grace to long, not merely to be spared punishment, but to be saved from sin.

We read of David not to judge him as if we were God, but to search our hearts to see how far his story is a parable spoken to us, that might be followed by the words "Thou art the man." We tremble as we think of the rank growth in him of sins such as have their root in us. We fear as we mark how his sin made his whole after life sad. We are roused to thankfulness that the God with whom we have to do is of such great goodness, and that His mercies fail not. We are warned to distrust ourselves and to learn the stealth of sin; how it numbs the feeling of those whom it would slay; how ready we are to still our hearts' misgivings, so as to live at the same time a life of devotion and a life of sin.

When we hear the voice that tells us what we are and makes our own mouth judge us, God shows us what He is, and gives us hope. Are our sins great as David's, are they worse, as the sins of Christians? God's goodness is greater. In the gift of Christ all that goodness can do is pledged. His mercy is firm and untiring as His own being. What it has been it is always. The endless multitude of forms in which men have found its help assures us that whatever help we need is ready. He who gives the heart to ask will give freely all we ask. His goodness seeks our good. His mercy does not will that any evil spoil us. If He judge us now, it is that we may not be condemned with those who choose sin.

"*Thy vows are upon me, O God: I will render praises unto Thee.*"—Ps. lvi. 12.

IT is better not to vow than to vow and not pay. But none are free: we all must vow; we all have vowed. God, as our Maker, keeps us under His care; the use of His gifts binds us to own and act upon His right to be honoured as the Giver. He takes us into covenant with Him; and we are pledged to learn His will and do it, with the help of the grace that we may at all times newly gain. Whenever we have claimed our place as Christians, and sought God as our Father, we have made fresh acknowledgment of the debt we owe. And we can think of times, when we have said out to God what we were thoughtfully resolved upon.

Other vows are written on high, which we cannot recall if we would. We have been low in sickness, and all our undone work has seemed to rise against us, as we sank helplessly towards the grave. Or some great sorrow has made life look dark and without hope; or the world's cares have come fast, and we have met with ill-will and scorn instead of sympathy. Or evil has got hold upon us, and we have felt as if God were lost and the way to heaven closed. We have cried to God, vowing what we would be and do, if He would in His mercy help. He heard us, and we have what He gave. Those vows are upon us, spoken loudly in the ear of God, written plainly in His book. One vow has strengthened those before it, and a great host of them, added to by each prayer and act of religion, witnesses to God's claim.

Each vow that we hold fast to honestly, tells of God's pledge to give help and blessing. He asks us but to do what we know is right and for our good, not led away by passing wish for passing things, or betrayed by our own sloth and heedlessness. How shall we keep our word with God? How shall we pay in full what our lips have vowed, when our minds saw the worth of things and our hearts were stirred by true feeling? We will thankfully tell what God has done for us. We will give ourselves in all we are to be His, hallowed for His use, ruled wholly by His will. We will strive to live so that we may show forth the praises of Him who has called us to be His, and who reminds us by unnumbered mercies that His vows are upon us.

"My soul thirsteth for Thee, my flesh longeth after Thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is."—Ps. lxiii. 1.

DAVID, wearied and an outcast, hid from his foes in the lonely wilderness. He did not, like the tormented rich man, ask for one drop of lost earthly consolations to cool desires still burning after them. He thirsted for God and for the refreshing grace that comes from Him. Without God life was indeed desert; his whole being was parched and withering.

When Christ upon the Cross cried "I thirst," He felt more than the dryness of His wounded, fevered frame. As man He stretched up towards God. He spoke not only His own desire, but the desire of all those wearied and heavy laden ones whose nature He had taken and whose sins He bore. For Him mankind had thirsted. He sought from God what He might give. Now He is the full fountain of grace. He makes men know and feel the want which He supplies. He is in men, raising their natures, so that the world's best and fairest cannot satisfy. Often the streams of earth are dried up, to prove how the deepest and fullest springs fail, that have not their source in God.

The land is dry and thirsty where we are. Our one hope is in Him, who can make streams in the desert and call water out of the hard rock. At the word of God the waters flow. He bloweth with the wind of His Spirit, and he that is athirst can drink of the waters of life freely. Blessed thirst that makes us glad to hear the word "Come," and is a pledge that we shall be refreshed! Dryness comes often before thirst. It is well that the pain be felt, that the cause of it may be relieved. We may be withering and ready to perish, and not know what our pain means. We may waste our strength in seeking to quench our spiritual thirst with what but makes it more keen and painful. God's grace flows in known channels; we can seek it if we will, and so the waters of life which come from Him shall be in us fountains of living water springing up unto everlasting life. He does not need us, save that His love is not satisfied without us. We cannot do without Him. Our whole being needs Him. The flesh, the lower nature, can be drawn into harmony with the spirit, so that all we are is one in seeking after God. What God gives and is to us deepens our longing till in His likeness we are satisfied.

"*The earth shook, the heavens also dropped at the presence of God.*"—Ps. lxviii. 8.

GOD led the way for His people. The Red Sea gave place and let them pass through. Foe after foe fled. The cloud by day and the fire by night showed where God went before them. When the sign of His Presence stood still they halted; they marched after it when it moved on. God met them in a special way at Sinai for a special end. Out in the desert they were alone with their God, while He gave them His law, and with signs of power bade them know how great and terrible was the God with whom they had to do. The strong hills shook at the touch of Him who had made them. The clouds fell round Sinai, and out of their dreadful gloom came storm and thunderings and lightnings and voices. None might draw nigh to the thick darkness where God was.

Thus did God, the same God whose people we are, proclaim that He meant what He said, and could fulfil His promises and warnings. His laws are part of His will, and so is the enforcement of those laws. To defy them is to dare the might that was behind those dread tokens that awed Israel at Sinai. To obey them is to claim and to have the shield of all that might. God may not be trifled with. But all that tells of Divine might tells of that might guided by Divine love to guard with gentlest care those who gather under its shelter and follow its leading.

There was darkness around the hill of Calvary; there was a great earthquake when God condemned sin upon the cross, and spread forth His arms of love to embrace those who would be His people. There were signs and sounds of awe when the Holy Spirit came to write the law of God upon the hearts of men. It was the Spirit, the love of God, that was present in fulfilment of the Saviour's word, to lead men away from the Egypt of sin across the wilderness of life, to the holy land of promise. When at times what is firmest on earth is shaken, and heaven darkens over us with gloom and threatening, all tells of God present and caring for us. He has led us out into the wilderness. Though alone we are alone with Him. We are on the way to the good land. He warns us lest we go back. He reveals His might, pledged to us as His people while we keep our pledge to Him as our God.

"O God, Thou hast taught me from my youth: and hitherto have I declared Thy wondrous works."—Ps. lxxi. 17.

GOD educated David for his work. As he looked back he could trace how God had gifted and trained him for his high trust. In the songs of praise which he wrote, and in the deeds by which he raised Israel to greatness, he made known the wonderful works of God.

Christ in His manhood was Himself perfected as a finished work of God. He grew wise and ripe in character as He lived in His Father's presence and did His Father's business. By the things that He suffered He learned obedience, becoming one in will with God. He declared God's wondrous works, while He gained man's favour by His strangely holy life. During the three years' ministry He showed what the long training of His early years had made Him. As men wondered at what He said and wrought, God was being declared to them, working by the Only-begotten.

Christ is in His Church now, the King of the true Israel. She can learn God's truth and grow wise under the discipline of her lot. She can declare what she has been taught, as the voice of Christ, in whose Name and by whose power she speaks. When we were born into the world, and when we were born into the Church, we were put into God's school. In how many ways, by His providence and by His spirit, has He cared for us! In all our joys and all our trials God has been our teacher, calling us to give heed to Him. In all the love and wisdom to be traced in the order of Nature and in the course of the world God has held a book open before us. In the Holy Scriptures and in the teaching of the Church the Spirit has sought to make us wise unto salvation. In the movements of the same Spirit within us we have been drawn towards truth and warned from error.

God expects us to be ever learning and to be ever making known His wondrous works. For the time we ought to be teachers. If we "know God, or rather are known of Him," taught by the Spirit the marvels of grace, we cannot be silent. We will search more deeply into the mysteries of God's dealings, and listen still to Him who has taught us. We will do our best in spreading a knowledge of God's ways and works which may be the heritage of generations yet unborn.

"*The earth feared, and was still, when God arose to judgment, to save all the meek upon earth.*"—Ps. lxxvi. 8, 9.

GOD is always to be feared, though He is not always feared by all. It may seem a light thing now to try His patience and presume upon His forbearing love. But with what power can we meet Him when He "comes forth out of His place?" When He breaks the long silence and causes judgment to be heard from on high, can we stand before Him who does as He wills, and from whom we cannot flee?

When the hosts of Assyria died by the hand of God, the world of men felt how near God was, and waited in awed silence for some further sign of the wrath of heaven. God is at all times the same, in His clear knowledge of what is right and His dread power to enforce His will. There is a fear of Him, without which the wisest of this world show want of thought as to the great fact that bears most solemnly on man's hope. There is a fear of Him which has no torment in it. When we judge ourselves, and are ready to bear what He lays on us that we may not be condemned with the wicked, our fear is a part of our worship.

As God's wrath is but one side of His love, so our fear of Him is part of our love and of our care to please Him. It was to save Noah that the flood came; it was to save Lot that the fire from heaven fell. God makes His voice heard and His sword of judgment felt; that those who have no earthly help may know that they are not alone, and may be warned to hate sin more from seeing to what it leads.

The meek inherit the earth now; for with quiet spirit they bow to what God lets befall them, by whatever means it comes. They have an inward peace which they would lose by want of meekness, and which is a pledge of the peace to be theirs in the new earth, where only the righteous are. So would we live, trusting Him with whom we have to do, fearing nothing but the loss of His favour, and ever putting ourselves anew under His care. When His judgments are abroad, and it is plain that the throne from which earth is ruled is in heaven, we are thankful that this is not for our ruin but for our help. And when we look forward to the great day of God's wrath, we lift up our heads; for God comes to save us: it is our redemption that draweth nigh.

"Turn us again, O God, and cause Thy face to shine; and we shall be saved."—Ps. lxxx. 3.

WHEN the cloud was lifted up and moved before the tribes, Israel went forward. In after times they thought of the guide which had never failed them, and of the light which had told them in the hours of darkness that God still was near. They longed for God to stir up His strength in their behalf. So with the spiritual Israel. We know how God has of old been with His Church. He has not lost His strength and love, though we may for a while have lost our part in the comfort of them.

God has made His face to shine on sinful man. Christ has appeared, the shining forth of the Father's glory, veiled indeed in flesh, but bringing the Divine love near. We know that God has not turned from us, but that we have gone from Him. Our sins have hid His face from us. We have looked away, and forsaken our God. So we are without the blessing which makes life good and free and glad. We cannot return ourselves; the lost sheep cannot find the shepherd; the Shepherd must find us, and bring us back. "Turn us and we shall be turned" is our cry—a cry of pain and helplessness, and yet of faith and hope; a cry that grows to be more an answer to the voice of love which calls to us.

We would be free from the sorrows to which our sin has brought us. If they must remain and remind us of our errors, we would have God's face to shine on us in blessing and comfort, making what saddens help to save. We lay hold on the promises of our God. We pray that our hearts and wills may be turned wholly from evil towards Him, that we may meet the grace that is ever shining forth making the Divine love felt. We pray that in God's light we may see light, and be able to walk as children of the light in the safe way. We pray that, like Moses, we may reflect the glory of the Holy One whom by faith we look upon. So shall we be saved from the power of all that would draw us away into the darkness of sin. We shall be freed from the bondage of our old state. We shall know that the face of God shines on us in favour and approval. We shall look forward with clearer hope, as the changing, saving work goes on, and we prepare to see God face to face.

"*Thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, long-suffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth.*"—Ps. lxxxvi. 15.

SO God proclaimed Himself to Moses, when He descended in the cloud on Sinai. The same God is our God, made known to us by new signs, more clear and full. He has spoken to us by His Son, and He has sent the Spirit to write upon our hearts the law, which in making known His will shows Him to us. Our hope in prayer rests on the nature of Him to whom we pray. We grow like Him whom we adore, and to whose rule we yield ourselves.

The names by which we call on God tell our faith in Him, and encourage us as we speak them. He is the Lord, the Supreme One, guiding all things from His throne. He is God Almighty, to whom the mightiest must bow. All these are helpless against God. His arm must conquer, His cause must prevail. But, moreover, all His might is that of One whose love takes many forms in meeting the needs of those who call upon Him. He looks upon our sorrows and cares with a fatherly compassion. There is no pity like that we find in Him, who knows each feeling of man's heart, and weighs the whole burden of the trial which no human sympathy can fully share.

He is gracious; not merely full of good will, but finding joy in pouring out His grace. We can come boldly to Him for help when we are tempted, and we know that we must fall if left alone. He is not soon turned from those whom He seeks to save. He is long-suffering, and waits to be gracious, even while we provoke Him with our unbelief and disobedience. His goodness fails not; there is no bound to the freedom with which He gives out of His great store. And all the best we can gain on earth, what is it to the good things prepared on high for those who welcome the influences of His love!

His promises are so large, that it is hard to be quite sure that they indeed are meant for us. But God is true, and we can count upon more than can be told us in those words of men which fail to bring before us the realities of heaven. As we meditate upon what God is, and praise Him for what He is, faith and hope and love grow strong; we learn what we ought to be and may become. We learn to trust the Almighty, who proclaims Himself to us as our God.

"Let Thy work appear unto Thy servants, and Thy glory unto their children."—Ps. xc. 16.

SO God's people were taught to pray. They were as a race the chosen servants of the Most High, and through them He wrought out His purpose for the good of men. The prayer is ours, for we are of the spiritual Israel. We can pray it with a more instructed faith and a more far-seeing hope. A new stage of God's work has begun in Christ. His glory appears under new forms. We are servants, bound to work for our Lord. We are children, who work gladly to please our Father. We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus; and it is He that worketh in us to will and to do.

There are times when we feel as if God had withdrawn His presence. But God's work goes on, though it does not appear. He hides Himself, that we may seek Him and His strength with a more lowly earnestness, and that His work may spread and deepen. We are His servants and must labour on in our place, though we feel left alone and no result is seen. What we do, looking for His help and seeking to do His will, is His work, which He will own in the right time. To His servants, not to those who serve themselves or the world, will His work appear. Their work alone will He proclaim to be His, done by Him and done for Him.

When we pray this prayer, we pray in humble confidence that He is with us, and that He will prove it soon. We hope for a nature in which sin has been subdued through hard conflict with temptation, and in which God's likeness has been formed by pressing after Christ through difficult ways and in spite of weariness and disappointment. And we hope to see the triumph of Christ's Church, after she has wrought miracles without being believed in, and taught without being obeyed, and been scoffed at by the world, and forsaken on the cross. We hope to see how God's work has been moving steadily towards its manifestation. God's glory is the shining forth of what He is. We see glimpses of it now. There is glory in each working of Divine grace, in each token of God's love. We pray in sure quiet hope that in after ages men may see more of that glory in the presence of which they live, and may show it more in themselves.

"It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known My ways."—Ps. xcv. 10.

GOD has His ways of working in providence and in grace. He also has His ways which His will marks out for His people to walk in. Where the heart is not right with God, where the will is not set to obey, God is mistaken and resisted. Men suffer in vain. The Divine hand is laid on them, and works no change in their nature or their life. Warnings are unheeded; blessings are not seen as signs of love, meant to win trust and to prepare for larger good. What is done to strengthen faith shakes it. The means which God uses to humble and purify tempt to pride and rebellion.

So God fails; for man will not know God's ways so as to yield to be trained and formed for God's rest. If we follow our own way, we are sure to go wrong and to miss the true end for which we are born. If the will be not united with a higher will, it is at the mercy of influences that lead it astray. We are safe only so far as we know the ways of God and walk in them with care. If we would know them we must learn them by going in them. When we will to do the will of God, and give Him our heart, He sends forth His light and His truth; He guides our steps lest we err; He holds us up lest we slip; He leads us on to find out more and more that God is with us of a truth, helping and blessing while He rules.

So we make God's ways our own ways, the paths of our choice and our delight. They are trodden, it may be, with toil and many a hardship; but they are full of pleasantness, nevertheless, and bright with the hope of rest at last with God to whom they lead. Questions must rise at times in our own hearts, and will be asked by others; and we shall not be able always to tell why God's ways of leading us are what they are. His hand will seem to work strangely, and His purposes of grace will be hidden so as to be hard for us to understand; but it is enough to trust Him and obey. The ways of duty are made plain to those who seek them with the honest will to walk in them. He who is the Way guides each true soul in the path of truth and life. For each of us there is a course marked by which we can best reach the rest of God. If we pray and watch and strive that we may not err in heart, we shall not err in life or lose the leading of our Lord.

"*Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy Name.*"—Ps. ciii. 1.

GOD'S word is with power. There is a change made in the state of him to whom the Divine blessing comes. The will of God is done. We cannot thus bless one another or bless God. When we bless our brethren, we call down on them grace from heaven. When we bless God, we use the blessings which we have from Him, so as to show forth the glory of His love. God made us for good, and means our life to be a growing blessing. Each power of mind and body, all by which we are able to do our work and enjoy the good and hope of life, is ours because God has blessed us.

We are too ready to take these things for granted, forgetting Him who gave, and on whom we are from hour to hour dependent. We need to stir up thought which wanders, to rouse feeling which grows cold, that so in our lives we may bless God. When we fail to do this, God often lays His hand on what we prize most, and warns us that we have nothing of our own. He takes away some blessings, lest we lose all, and be parted from the one source of good. Better for us to be drawn by a deepening knowledge of the love that gladdens life with good things, than to be driven by sorrows to bless Him who will not lightly lose us.

God's Name is holy. In all His manifestations of Himself His holiness appears. We see Him in His truth, and love the true and holy One. So we pray for a due sense of His mercies as one blessing, without which all others may be in vain. When the soul is right the life is true. The will yields to the movements of the love of God with sure trust, so that God's blessing rests on the work of life, and all things are made to work together for good. While we keep in mind the "most excellent gift" of God's own Son, and all the benefits of salvation, we are moved to bless and glorify the Divine love, though all other good things seem to be withheld. Having nothing, we are possessed of all things, if Christ be in us the hope of glory. We bless the Lord, while we use the means of grace which make Christ more our Saviour, and use the grace given in a life lived by the faith of the Son of God, who loved us and gave Himself for us.

"*He hath remembered His covenant for ever.*"—Ps. cv. 8.

GOD gave His word to Abraham. He did not bind Himself as if He needed to be bound; but He made men sure that His purpose stood firm and lasting as His throne. They learned also how to act so as to share the promised good. God could not change His mind, but men might cease to be of those to whom His word was pledged, and so be out of covenant with Him. It was to Abraham as the father of the faithful that God spoke. The people sprung from him after the flesh were a type of his spiritual posterity. The Canaan from which the heathen were cast out figured the true Land of Promise, won for the true Israel by the right hand of the Lord. All was but preparation, till He was born in whom all the families of the earth should be blessed.

We are heirs of the promises; we are in the covenant, so long as we are in Christ. And while Christ lives to give union with God, and rights in the grace of God, the generations of men shall find that God remembers and keeps His word. No change in our state among men need shake our hold on God's promise, or move us from the way of faith and obedience in which we prove it true.

How much that covenant means, made by the Creator with His dependent creatures! By giving us life and a body, He has covenanted to care for our needs on earth and to cherish the life that is from Him. So by making us sharers in the calling of His chosen people, He has undertaken to provide for our spiritual needs. We have our work to do, our part to fulfil, as those who have been taken into covenant. He sends us light and gives us knowledge, that the way of duty may be plain. He bestows strength, that we may not fail in gaining any part of the good which He has promised to the faithful. Alas! we fall short, and we are ever in danger of losing all through unbelief or lack of care. But God knows our weakness. If we are true in wishing and trying to be true, He who is true always to all will reach out to us His arm of help and speak His word of hope. He will help our unbelief, so that the word of our God may be our sure stronghold in all time of trial. He will make this confidence a holy motive to effort, that we may be faithful to Him, as He is true to us, for ever.

"He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and brake their bands in sunder."—Ps. cvii. 14.

JUDGMENTS came on Israel to warn them to flee from a worse doom. They had set up their own will in stubborn defiance of God's words. God let them learn the worth of His care by withdrawing it. They found that where His guiding, ruling hand was put away, His hand was no longer over them to guard and bless. The light of happiness left them, with the light of purity and truth. Only God could give them back what their misery had taught them to prize.

God pleads with us, making known His truth and will. These have their right power over us, unless we set up our wills against them. This defiance makes us rebels. We may or we may not feel worldly loss or harm; we surely do become worse in ourselves. We cannot dare God and be as if we obeyed Him. Darkness comes where light is not used. The light is withdrawn; the power of seeing weakens till the soul is blind. Gloom gathers over the soul, as it dies from God, losing the Divine life which has striven in vain to be a power for holiness and joy. What has been chosen as pleasure, becomes task-work which wearies and shames. Each willing act of sin tightens the chain, so that it is harder to do good and to refuse evil. What a darkness is that which is caused by the willing sin which hides God's face! What a shadow is that which tells of the death which means the loss of God! How grievous are those bonds in which the soul sinks down, helpless to break free! How dreadful to sit, to remain content, in that state of ignorance and blindness and slavery!

One has come to preach deliverance to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind. However like death our sleep may be, however blind we are to the spiritual facts around us, Christ can give us light, showing us truth and imparting holiness. However long we have been bound in the yoke of sin, however mighty is sin's hold, He can make the chains fall off from us, and guide our feet in the way of peace. It is so with each single fault, which hinders the movement and spoils the brightness of our religious life. If it be felt a trouble, and we cry to the Lord, He will give us cause to praise Him. But our cry must be in faith and hope; we must rouse our wills to use the power which is given even while we pray.

"*The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.*"—Ps. cxi. 2.

ALL the works of the great God are, like Himself, great. God can do nothing that is not best. We can only see a part of any work of His, and trace its working only for a little way; so we think we find more love and might and wisdom in one than in another. God's works are perfect and far-reaching in their bearing upon the great purposes which are set before His love, and guided by His wisdom, and accomplished by His power. They are understood, so as to be delighted in, by those who love God.

When God is real to us, and we own Him as the God of providence and grace, then all that goes on in the world and in the Church has a new and holy meaning. We search everywhere, in all that goes on, for signs of what faith tells us that God is. We feel no mere curiosity, but a devout interest in the course of things of which we are a part. And God opens our eyes to see. True we cannot find out the Almighty to perfection. He would not be great as He is, could we fully know Him; His works would be like our own, if we could even think of their whole meaning. Christ while He reveals God, remains Himself a mystery. The Holy Spirit, though He enlightens us, does not give us Divine wisdom. Human words cannot express duly the meaning of the truths of God; man's mind is not large enough to take in the whole of what is in the mind of the Infinite. But faith that seeks, finds that which stirs up love to praise, and which strengthens faith to go on searching.

It is pleasure indeed to mark how God rules on earth. It is pleasure to see order in what looks like worst confusion, and a high end in what looks aimless. It is pleasure to trace the Divine love and wisdom in the work of grace, and the wonderful provision by which souls are brought under the influence of the Person of Jesus Christ. Like all other studies this of searching out in all things the work of God grows in interest as the ability increases. If it be thus full of delight while we see so dimly and understand so faintly, what will be the pleasures of that state when we are gifted with the powers of the heavenly life, and God's works are unfolded in their glory!

"*Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.*"
Ps. cxvi. 15.

NOT a sparrow falls without our Father. The Lord is loving unto every man. He cares specially for those who are called into His family. If we are trying indeed to live for Him, He is with us while we live and when we die. As He rules our lives, He times our death. We do not die till our work here is done, and we are ready for higher work in a purer world. To die in union with Christ is to depart to be with Christ, which is far better even than having Him with us here. To lay down life for Christ is to do as far as man can, and in another way, what He did for us.

If for us to live is Christ, then to die is gain. If we have day by day put the keeping of our souls into His hands in well-doing, then we can in the closing hour commend our spirits to our Father in the Saviour's Name. To spend our lives for Him, and be ready always to bow to His will, is a true offering, precious in His sight. We give Him what He treasures, when we die to sin, and put ourselves with obedient faith under His fatherly control.

The very hairs of our head are numbered. In His sight we are of more value than those creatures of His care, who know Him not and are not His children. His strong, watchful providence rules and overrules all that comes to pass throughout our changeful lives; and He feels and acts for us in that crisis when we prepare to pass to our new state. So there need be no nervous wonder in looking forward. We can cast all our care on Him who careth for us, and who in the hour of death will give us the peace of God.

Again, God loves to see the old nature die, giving place to the new, which is strengthened and matured day by day. With what loving welcome does He receive the soul which has left behind the burden of the flesh, and has passed out of reach of evil! It is all in His own care; it begins a new course of training in that rest which prepares for the yet higher influences of the life of glory. We are precious to Him when we first breathe the breath of natural life. We have a new worth to Him when we are buried with Christ in baptism and rise with a new life in Christ. We are more precious in His sight when by another death we pass to the life of the glorified.

"*Let Thy mercies come also unto me, O Lord, even Thy salvation, according to Thy word. So shall I have wherewith to answer him that reproacheth me.*"—Ps. cxix. 41, 42.

GOD'S word upheld the saints, who in old time waited for the unspeakable gift of Divine mercy, the promised Saviour. Men asked them, "Where is now your God?" and their hearts could not but at times echo with such taunts in a way that seemed to tell of rising doubt. But they clung to God's sure word, and through His mercy their faith kept them faithful. We who look for the coming of Christ, when salvation shall be revealed, do not pray only for that last triumph. The "Lord is at hand" even now with His mercies. The Saviour who is and who brings Salvation, has promised, "I will come unto you."

We ask mercy; for we feel and own our sin, which forbids to press our claim on God in any other way. We need mercies many and manifold; for such are our needs and our unworthiness. We ask that God in Christ may come to our souls, saving us from the unbelief that refuses mercy and thinks coldly of salvation. We ask to be freed from sins which shame us in our own eyes, and make our witness before men weak. We ask to be kept by the power of God, and to abide in Christ's love by keeping His commandments.

Doing the will of God, we know of His doctrine, and are unshaken by the doubtings of unbelievers or the false teaching of those who corrupt the truth. We are able to give an answer to those who ask a reason of our faith, not in word only, but in our lives. Firm through evil report and good, guided by Divine grace and saved in temptation, we are able to put to silence those who reproach us as evildoers. We put away, as Job did, the suggestions of the tempter. We answer boldly that God's mercies are sure, and that we trust Him, though we cannot always trace the hand of mercy in His dealings with us. We wait till His work is more nearly done. We pray for mercies, even though they must come in what seem unmerciful ways. We ask for salvation, even though we must bear a heavy cross in hard paths. We bless God that He has promised to withhold no spiritual mercy that we will receive, and to give salvation from all spiritual harm that we do not choose.

"*Be surety for Thy servant for good: let not the proud oppress me.*"—Ps. cxix. 122.

IF we are God's servants, other lords have no right over us. He gave us our being, and we are His. He called us to be His servants, and we have vowed to obey Him. He is our Father, and we serve Him with the freedom of sons and the hope of heirs. Not only do our angels behold His face, but Christ, who undertook our cause, is our Advocate in whose Name we plead. We do not ask more than He has told us He will do, when we ask to be kept free to serve Him, and in the end to find good. We have already many a pledge that the covenant of the Unchanging shall not fail. In our prayers we speak our trust in this as our great hope.

The world in its proud rebellion sets God at nought, and scorns those who fear Him. We must not think it strange if the world does not understand us, and is against all that we hold most dear. The shame as well as the pain of the Cross must be borne. Yet we pray to be strong in the power of Him whom we serve, and to overcome as Christ did, even when we seem to be helpless in our foes' hands. We pray that we may with true and lowly and brave heart do the will of God, and bear what is His will. So shall the proud not crush us, but be indeed the means for working out the good ends of Him whom we serve.

We dread sin more than the world's scorn and dislike. We fear lest evil gain dominion over us by our fault and unfaithfulness. We are comforted by the pledges which God has given that He has indeed begun the good work in us. We draw nigh in all ways that are made known, that we may find God anew draw nigh to us. Each effort we make in the Name of God to beat down the risings of sin within us, or to put back the temptings of the world, or to go on in duty's path, spite of flagging strength and crowding difficulties, is a call upon our covenant God to stand up for those who serve Him. We would not have what seems to us good, and may be evil in itself or in what it leads to. If trial be needful to teach and train us, that is mercy. We are God's servants, and we long to learn how to serve Him better and grow wiser unto salvation. When He has made us good in ourselves He will make our condition happy.

"I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord."—Ps. cxxii. 1.

THE thoughts and the love of devout Jews were drawn to Jerusalem. Thither the tribes went up, from time to time, to keep their feasts of faith and joy. Thus they held their place among the covenant people. They thanked God for Israel's past, and for the grand hopes in which they shared. They pledged themselves anew to God, and glorified Him for the rights in Him which His grace gave them. When far from the temple, they still joined in spirit with that worship which could be offered only there, and to which the Divine promise was pledged.

Our instinct of worship ought to be even stronger than that of God's old Church; for we know even more clearly "what we worship." Our feeling of unity should be deeper, though there is no longer only one central home where we meet with God. We know of far more for which to give thanks, and have holier cause for joyful hope. The spiritual Israel can plead the sacrifice of the Lamb of God, and enjoy fellowship with God in the Passover of the New Covenant. The true worshippers worship, in spirit and in truth, One who in a new way is made known as the Father. There is an inward presence of grace now, since the Spirit has come to dwell in man. Our means of grace are not types or empty forms. In them we meet God, and find the gifts which Christ ascended to receive for man. We know more of God as a God of love; and are one body, as members of Christ.

Well may we be glad when those who share with us one hope in the one God call us to go with them, that we may send up one voice of praise, and wait with one faith for the Divine grace to fall upon us. And we can join in spirit with worshippers in far-off lands. One Spirit stirs our hearts to prayer. One Christ is adored, and gives Himself to all the faithful. To one Father we draw near through the one Mediator. And when our feet cannot stand with those who gather in their house of prayer, our hearts need not be alone. Our worship shall be added to that which goes up from the great company. More than this, we are one with those who know the gladness of the Father's house on high, and are within the gates that nothing evil can pass.

"I will also clothe her priests with salvation: and her saints shall shout aloud for joy."—Ps. cxxxii. 16.

WHEN the ark was brought to Zion, God proclaimed that He was come to dwell among His people. He would guard His priests who served before Him; He would bless His worshippers, and they should without fear tell aloud their gladness. But more is meant in the promise; it is an answer to the prayer, "Let Thy priests be clothed with righteousness." Righteousness is salvation; for it is the presence and power of God in the soul, ruling the whole being, and saving it from the grasp of evil.

In one sense all God's people were a kingdom of priests. But there were, then as now, those whose special office was to bear the vessels of the Lord. They had to be clean, for their own sakes, and for the sake of those who at their hands received the gifts that made them glad. Now in like manner, those who are called to be saints in the Church of Christ share a royal priesthood. We all have a part in that worship which seeks and rejoices in God's presence. We join in offering those spiritual sacrifices by which we hold fast to the rights in God with which His grace has blessed us. Christ is our righteousness. He cleanses us, and robes us with His own spotless holy nature. This takes the place of all that is unfit for the eye of God. It adorns and glorifies our inmost being where only God sees. It keeps us safe, for it is strong armour. It is a breastplate which turns aside the weapons of the tempter, so that they do not reach our life. And it shines before men, witnessing to what God does, telling of what His work will be when it is finished.

Well may we shout aloud for joy, if indeed Christ is our righteousness, and we can look forward to full redemption when salvation is revealed in the last time! The work of those who are called to be, in a higher sense than the priests under the law, "Stewards of the mysteries of God," tells on the good and joy of the whole Church. The "Ministers of Christ" have much to do with the salvation of His people. The great High Priest will be with those whom He sends. They shall so put on the righteousness which He gives, that they shall save themselves, and minister to the salvation and eternal joy of those to whom Christ sends them.

"How precious also are Thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them!"—Ps. cxxxix. 17.

IT is good that the signs of God's love lead us to Him who loves. So our love to Him is kindled and a new joy is found. It is good also to think over the tokens of His wise care and rule, which tell us what His thoughts are. Above us in the heavens, and all around us on earth, wonders meet us without end, full of always fresh interest and delight. The world, with its past story and its changes ever going on, calls for the close study of all who care for man's well-being. We find added pleasure when we search the marvels of Nature and watch the course of things, looking beyond them, and gaining knowledge of the Worker who is over all. He is greater than what He has made and what He rules. There is new meaning in everything when we connect it with God.

We are ever learning fresh facts about man's bodily frame, each a fresh witness to the wisdom of Him in whose thought man first took form. We are ever learning more of the mysterious union of mind and body, and the marvellous fitness of the parts of our nature for the work they have to do. The world where we live calls for ever new wonder, as the stores laid up for man's use and comfort are discovered. And when we count up God's work in Christ, and the good things ready in His Church meeting every need and longing of our souls, we can but exclaim, "O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!"

As God has had such thought of us and for us, as we owe so much from hour to hour to His thought to usward, we should think of Him. We should learn to see Him in whatever we have and enjoy and admire and love, so gaining the habit of living under His close influence. The study of God must be the greatest to which we can give our minds. God's thoughts are not as ours. But we can trace enough to make our lives strong and brave and hopeful. Day by day we awake to find ourselves still with the God who spreads His works before us, and lets us learn His thoughts that we may know Him in His wisdom and love. When we awake in the new life we shall learn the meaning and preciousness of the thoughts which, in the imperfect light and with the weak powers given to us now, we can only a little understand.

"The Lord is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy."—Ps. cxlv. 8.

THESE were God's words of Himself when He would have Israel to know Him with whom they had to do. We use them to tell our faith and hope and joy in God. God is love. When He shows love He shows Himself. His grace is the going forth of His nature, that His works may feel the good of which He is the source. Like the sun, He cheers and warms where His influence is not shut off. He has countless ways of blessing to meet the countless needs of those on whom He shines. We want more than the love which falls on those who are without fault before Him. We want more than the love in which they who are with God find their fulness of joy. We are tired, and we are sinful; we know but little, and our strength is small. We are in the midst of dangers. He who was in all points tried as we are, remembers "the days of His flesh."

God is "grieved for the misery" of His creatures, even when it is caused by their own fault. He enters into all our pain in looking back, and all our care and doubt in trying to foresee. And His compassion is active and helpful. God pities us most for that sin which stands between us and His blessing. God's anger is against sin. It must be; for sin thwarts His love in its work. Those who give their hearts and yield their wills to evil make themselves one with that on which God's wrath surely falls.

God gives us time to find out how false sin is. He does not withdraw His grace while there is a hope of our return to Him. He feels for us in our struggle, even when we fail to be brave and true. He knows how hard the fight is, and how much help we must have if we are to win. He pities us for the sure loss and shame that each fall and failure will bring, and the greater weakness which will make our after work harder. He does not merely wait and watch: He is of great mercy, and while we are unmindful of Him and unthankful, His goodness "leadeth us to repentance." The forbearance of Him who might justly cast us off, the mercies that fail not, all plead with us to put away doubts and to trust our God. With His own Son He will freely give all things to those who with true heart seek Him.

"*The Lord openeth the eyes of the blind.*"—Ps. cxlvi. 8.

CHRIST healed men who had been born blind, or who had lost their sight. He opened out to them a new world of pleasure and usefulness. But He came to preach and to give recovery of sight not only to the bodily blind. He cared for those who were spiritually in darkness, while the light of God shone around them. The eye loses its power where the light from heaven does not come: so the soul grows blind in the darkness of sin. When God is not looked up to with fear and love, faith is lost; God and the things of heaven become as if they were not. It is in vain that the light of truth shines, unless the eye of the spirit be open and pure. God alone can enable to see in His light.

Some say they see, and are indeed blind. They trust in themselves that they know the truth; and all the while the light that is in them is darkness. So they believe what is false; they mistake evil for good, and good for evil. They will not be guided or set right, and go on boldly to their ruin. Led by their own blinded conscience and judgment, they fall in their blindness. The touch of God can make the scales drop, so that the power of discerning things that are more excellent is given, and they perceive how they ought to walk and to please God. Truth is seen in its clearness and beauty. The way of obedience is plain. The beam is gone, and they are able, as fellow-workers with God, to help to remove the motes from their brothers' eyes.

We look so much to the things that are seen by the eye of flesh, that we lose the power of realising the eternal things in the midst of which we move. Christ, whom we try to follow, seems so dim and far off that our eyes fail in looking for Him. We forget the nearness of God, and of those whom He sends forth as ministering spirits. Things on high seem so unreal, that they fail to draw our hearts and our hope. So it is that our life is so wanting in cheer and strength. So we are easily turned aside and daunted and made sad. Though we can see, we are too often blind in part, and need the Divine healing touch. The God of this world blinds with unbelief. He who commanded the light to shine out of darkness can shine in our hearts, so as to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

"I laid me down and slept, and rose up again; for the Lord sustained me."—Ps. iii. 5.

NOT in sloth or carelessness, but thoughtfully and with a quiet prayer, we lay us down. The strong tender hands of God are under us. The angels of God keep watch and guard around. Yet more, the life of the Eternal God is within us. So we are upheld in being. So we are safe from the coming near of evil. So we awaken to bear our burden and fulfil our duties again, with renewed force, refreshed and thankful. While we rest, the mysterious movements of our life go on under the care and guidance of our Maker. His unwearying power renews the wasted nerve, calms the tired brain, heals and builds up what has been worn or hurt or has lost its tone.

All our being needs repose; so is the will of God. Not alone the body and the mind, but the spiritual nature, the new life which we have from Him, is tended in ways God knows of, while earthly things are shut away. Does He not breathe fresh grace and peace upon us, which we find ready when we go forth again to our work and our warfare? We are glad to put ourselves thus into the kind arms of our Father for a while. We do it thankfully and devoutly. It is as when in means of grace we lay ourselves before Him with due preparation, that He may renew our soul's life, and impart the sustaining power of His Divine Presence.

Our rising up, each morning, is a figure and a promise of the resurrection. As we awake to consciousness and go forth, we learn to rest in Him who sustains us in being, and calls us back to the thought and will and activity of life. So we are trained for that last act of faith, when we shall commend our spirit with all our eternal cares to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are roused to praise God with all our quickened powers by using them for Him. We are reminded anew that they are His gift. In all our life we are called to learn aright that song of thankfulness which the redeemed shall sing where there is no night, where none are ever weary, and none sleep from sorrow. On the morning of the endless day all mortal imperfection shall be left behind, and union with Christ shall be perfected.

"The expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever."
Ps. ix. 18.

THOSE whose good things are all on earth trust in what soon must pass away; they reach the end beyond which they have no hope, and all is gone. At last a forgotten God makes Himself known as One who remembers and judges. The poor who are rich in faith, looking for the kingdom of which God has made them heirs, do not find their hope fail. God is for ever. Always the whole case of each one is before Him. When it is right and as it is best, He openly takes the part of His people.

If we remember God in heart and life, God keeps us and our remembrance of Him in mind. Our thoughts of Him meet His thoughts of us; our love rises to His love, which kindles it; our lives lived for Him receive His blessing. We are not crowded out of His notice; He does not turn away at times, drawn from us by the claims of others. He does not overlook us in our littleness. Poor in this world we may be, yet He knows us as rich towards Him, and with wealth laid up for us on high. At the point to die we have eternal life in Christ. Scorned and set at nought by men, we are cared for as of untold worth by our Creator and Redeemer. God tells us of the everlasting good that is in store. He will not disappoint the faith He gives. Though He bear long with us, and put patience to hard trial; it is but that we may find more laid up for us in the end, and may be more fully trained to enjoy it.

At what small cost do we thus add to the weight of glory that is to be ours! How few and short, after all, are the days of patience, when what we wait for shall be enjoyed for ever! We know what our trial is, how long and sore we feel it to be; we sometimes can hardly bear the strain of spirit while we hope for that which we see not, and rest on the word of One who is invisible. We know with what effort we add a quiet "Thy will be done" to the painful cry "Lord, how long?" We do not know yet, but we shall know when God's time comes, what cause we have to praise God for all His mercies, and, among the rest, for the seeming forgetfulness which is indeed the most careful remembrance.

"*Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth.*"
Ps. xvi. 9.

CHRIST knew God as no other could who lived and was to die. So there was gladness in His heart, as He thought of the Divine unchanging love, and of the good to which the path by which He went was leading Him. As His people are made one with Him in His sufferings and His war with sin, so His confidence can be theirs now. We are His holy ones, if we are hallowed by union with Him, and if we keep up that union by receiving and putting forth the power of His life.

Those who are without God in the world have no hope beyond it. But we can see farther than to the end of our life here. We are partakers of God's eternity. Having the Son of God, we have life. We hold fast by faith to Christ's word, and to His grace and to Himself. We have His promise that we shall never die. What men call death does not part from Him. He does not forsake His people when they go from earth. So in our hearts there is a deep gladness which outward changes do not touch. Rather, on account of those outward changes, the firm abiding ground of joy is prized more. The outward body of humiliation must be laid aside, and it is well that all that has to do with our sinful life passes away. The new being, which God makes glorious, and which is felt more and more to be our true self, rejoices in the future of which its blessedness even now is the pledge.

We need not fear the untried scenes through which we must pass; for we know Him who goes with us. We are glad to think that, after all the hardship and care of the long pilgrimage, we shall be at rest. We shall be nearer to Him who bids us bring our burden and weariness to Him. We shall be nearer to the fulness of the joy set before us.

We do not shrink from the thought of dust becoming dust again. In the way that God knows best this mortal shall put on immortality, and this corruption shall put on incorruption. Our souls shall not be left unclothed. We shall wear the image of the heavenly. Our souls shall act and be acted on through bodies made like unto the glorious body of the risen and ascended Saviour.

"By them is Thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward."—Ps. xix. 11.

HE Who took upon Him the form of a servant came to do His Father's will. He found obedience His meat and drink, which upheld and refreshed Him. By the light of God's will He saw through the wiles of evil. He increased in favour with God, and passed to His glory. In Him we see the law of God lived. We have a pattern, not only a description.

God fences off the narrow way. He marks the by-paths of sin. He warns of each weakness and of all that might do us harm. He guides to the means of renewing strength. He not only says "Do this," but do it in this way, by the power of this offered grace. We may keep God's law in mind and heart, though in life we sadly fail to keep it as we would.

There is great reward, even now, to those who seek good in God's way. Godliness hath the promise of this world. Defiance or neglect of the laws of God written in Nature and in His Word bring sure harm and loss. Peace and health and friends and prosperity are commonly best gained and kept by following the rules of religion. Righteousness, moreover, is its own reward. There is reward in being of one mind with God, at peace with Him, led on willingly by the All-holy who means to make us worthy of Him. There is a joy and rest in the feeling that our nature is being braced and trained and ennobled by the habit of doing right, that our tastes are being purified, that we are being made fit for higher things. There is reward in the closer communion with God which is given to those who keep His Word and seek to do His will.

But all this is only a hint and a dawning of the eternal recompense when we know indeed what God is, and is to us. We look to enter into the joy of the Lord, at the end of the narrow way; and to receive the crown of righteousness, when we have kept the faith and endured. We bless God for the grace which enables us to do what grace will reward for doing. Love finds great reward in pleasing God. There will be full delight when God is unveiled before us, and His love shines down on us in its full glory and power to bless.

"According to Thy mercy remember Thou me for Thy goodness' sake, O Lord."—Ps. xxv. 7.

THE goodness of the unchanging God is the sinner's hope. He is Love, and He delighteth in mercy. He shows love in its greatest power, where it is most needed and least deserved. When we look back on our early days, and count the faults and follies which God saw, we are ashamed before Him. We think how we wilfully dared His laws, how we forgot His claims on us, and the solemn meaning of our life. We are aware of the scars which those sins have left. We feel the want of the knowledge and ability which more thought and earnestness might have given, and the weakness of will due to habits formed in days of trifling. We reap now the fruit of the sins and follies of youth.

God knows us in our whole past, and as we are marked and moulded by that past. If we know ourselves, we are thankful that we know Him and that He knows us. We express and we rouse our faith, while we remind God of the tender mercy and the loving-kindness that are His. We do well to judge our sins harshly, and to show our hate of them by stern self-discipline. So we get to prize God's forgiving mercy, and prove that we are earnest in seeking His restoring goodness.

We plead with God to remember and show forth His eternal and never-failing goodness. Nothing is too hard for it to do; there is no hope too high for it to encourage. We ask God to make known to us that goodness which is Himself, and comes near in Christ. Our sins come between us and our God, and hinder Divine love from blessing us. We lay them before Him, that for Christ's sake He may put them out of His sight and look on us with no cloud between.

We need, moreover, that God's goodness ever keep us in loving care, lest the memory of youthful sin stain us, and we have still the foolishness of youth, when for the time, we ought to be teachers and examples of steadfast prudence in God's ways. What comfort that God gives us the right to plead before Him, and appeal to Him by the honour of His Name! So we fear not to ask to be remembered; for we are sure He will remember us for good, remembering our sins no more, but remembering His tender mercies.

"*Into Thy hand I commit my spirit.*"—Ps. xxxi. 5.

WITH these words of quiet trust the Man Christ Jesus put His parting soul into His Father's care. The faith which had upheld Him all through life was unchanged in the dying hour. He still held fast to the God of truth, whom He had proved true, and whose strong love would not fail where His soul was going.

Christ always spoke and acted as our representative. In these words, spoken while He was laying down life for us, each spirit that trusts itself to Him was given to God's keeping. All who are made one with Him are made sure of a Divine Father's care during life on earth, and welcome when they pass away. God has redeemed us, sparing not His own Son; so He has begun a good work which He wills to carry on until the day of Christ, giving us freely all that we need of will and power for our salvation.

Now, while face to face with many dangers, and often sorely tempted to lay down the cross under which we are ready to sink, we find it hard to keep our souls. The world presses in on us; the flesh drags us back when we would rise heavenwards. There are spiritual enemies whom we cannot in our own strength make to flee. The safety of our spirits is a dearer interest to God than it can be to us; for they are His: He knows their worth. We need fear no evil if we trust our spirits to His care, and by ever-new acts of faith and will keep ourselves in His hand. While we let that hand lead us and restrain us and mould us, it will let no harm come near. None shall pluck us out of His hand of love, if we are willing to be ruled by that hand in the ways of wisdom and holiness.

Taught how sure a guard and comforter God's hand is in this life's conflict and trial, we shall be ready to trust ourselves to it when we go to the new scenes of the life beyond. Christ, who had us in His heart when He spoke as man His faith in God, will be one with us to the end. He will "receive our spirits" and present them to His Father as those whom He has redeemed and gifted with His own life. From God our spirits came, and by His love they are ransomed. We commit them to Him as to a faithful Creator and a Father and Friend in Christ.

"*Let them shout for joy, and be glad, that favour my righteous cause: yea, let them say continually, Let the Lord be magnified, which hath pleasure in the prosperity of His servant.*"—Ps. xxxv. 27.

CHRIST, though a son, took on Him the form of a servant. Doing God's will as man, He was among men as one that serveth. He made known on earth God's righteousness. He brought it to men, so that they might have it as their own. The triumph of His cause is the triumph of righteousness. When God puts to shame those who rejoice in iniquity, then those who rejoice with the truth are glad. They praise God for the glory brought to Christ's Name.

We know that at Gethsemane and Calvary the cause of Christ prospers in a true, sure way. But we are not wrong to ask that faith shall not always have to bear so hard a test. We pray that the world may own that God sees and cares, and judges righteously. We pray that those who take God's side may be cheered by signs of Heaven's interest in their conflict. We are ready to go on in faith, if God's will be so; but we long to be encouraged to hope and thankfulness.

As with Christ's cause in the Church, so with it in our own natures. We prosper, if our cause is the cause of righteousness, if our aim is one with God's. We prosper, as Christ in us subdues all that rises against God's will, and possesses all we are with His changing, ruling power. We may prosper most when, to all but faith, we appear to sink unhelped to ruin. We may be nearest to the crown of our work and warfare when, to the world all seems lost, and to our own souls no cheer comes. But while we wait in lowly patience, still we long to be able to trace the course of our prosperity, and to feel the coming of the peace of God.

God is pleased when the indwelling Christ strengthens us to endure, while we learn obedience and seek righteousness. He is more pleased when He can safely spare us, when by due use of His might we have won peace, and He can give His blessings in that form which even the world can know to be prosperity. God cares for our highest good first: He loves to bestow all lesser gifts which do not imperil that. Thus He proves Himself a present God, even to those who cannot recognise His work for souls.

"*I waited patiently for the Lord; and He inclined unto me, and heard my calling.*"—Ps. xl. 1.

So all at last can say who wait for the Lord. None wait in vain who wait on Him aright. He not only looks from on high on those whose one hope He is: He bends down and reaches them with His help. He hears the call by which their faith pleads the claim He gives, and He is ready to be their Saviour. Through long ages man waited for the promised Lord; generations died in faith, not having received the promise which seemed still far off. In the fulness of time, when all things were made ready, Christ came, bringing God near and giving the Divine answer to the prayers which God inspired and heard.

When the crucified Saviour rose to ascend to His glory, He had gained the reward of His long years of patient waiting. The Lord heard Him always, and each moment of waiting brought its own drawing near of God to bless. At last the work was shown finished, and the Son of Man, being made perfect, declared the goodness and truth of the Lord to Himself and to those in whose cause He waited.

We who are His members have the same truth and love to wait upon; in union with Him we wait. As we can love God only because He first loved us, so we wait and call upon Him, enabled by the grace which He has given. God waits for us, slow as we are to rise towards Him in thought and heart, to hear His call, and to seek help in the way of His will. He is longsuffering, not willing that any should fail of salvation.

To wait on God is not to let the hands hang down and leave unused the means which God has given, asking Him to work a miracle in our behalf. It is to go on bravely, though humbly, in the way of duty, doing our best in His sight and with sure trust that He hears our call and comes with new support and blessing. We best do our part to prepare for the triumph of His grace by earnest living in the way of His will. We do not dare to tell Him how to show His care, or when to end the trial of our faith. He has often let us see that His time and way have been best. Faith makes us sure that always it has been the same. We ask and strive earnestly to know how we ought to wait for Him and to call on Him. So we can with thankful patience ask and seek and knock.

"Grace is poured into Thy lips: therefore God hath blessed Thee for ever."—Ps. xlv. 2.

TO Christ God gave the Spirit without measure. It pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell. For He came as the Mediator, in whose human nature all God's goodness should be brought near to men. Through Him all that man as a spiritual being could need was to go forth from God. He was blessed, that He might give blessing. He is blessed now in the fruit of His toil and Cross. He is Head over all things to the Church, which is His Body. He gives of what He has won; and for ever shall His people find how full His store is of varied good. All is for our sakes. Brought into living union with Him, the members share with the Head. What is His becomes more our wealth and joy, as we go on in those ways by which we abide in Him. We hear His call to come to Him and follow Him; till at last He shall say to us, "Come, ye blessed of My Father."

He is the Word of God, manifesting what God is, as far as we can learn and know; so His words tell us of the love and wisdom and holiness that are in Him. "Never man spake like this man." As man His whole being was ever under the light of God, who blessed it for its work and in its work. All wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of the mouth of Christ. We are prepared for wonders, as we know that by that mouth God spoke to men. We are won by the voice that calls us in the name of God, and bids us lay aside the distrust which holds us back from blessing.

Truth has a new charm and power when taught by the lips of Him, who speaks that which He knows, and testifies what He has seen behind the veil that bounds our view. Laws given by the Saviour, whose obedience unto death gained for us blessing for ever, find their way gently into the heart, so that our will yields gladly. His word is with power, bringing with it the blessing of faith and healing and holiness. We can come within the power of those words which His lips have spoken. We can gain our full part in those gifts of grace which He is ever breathing down through the means by which He tells us to draw nigh. What He is given He gives. He blesses with His own blessing. The grace that comes is without stint, and is for ever.

"*Wash me throughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.*"—Ps. li. 2.

WHEN the will chooses in spite of God, the soul goes from God's care. It is easy then to act falsely with God and to go on in blind self-deceit. Out of hearing of the guiding voice, led no longer by the firm hand, the soul strays helplessly into worse ways of sin. Not only is new guilt ever being added, the soul is being changed. Its look in the sight of God grows darker, as each sin leaves its stain, and the whole nature grows unclean through evil habit. The mind and conscience are defiled, so that what keeps watch over all the man is or does can be trusted no more.

We have no power to regain what is in our power to lose. We do not even find in ourselves the will to seek God, till He first seek us. He leaves none without warning and the drawing of His grace; He forces none to hear and act. No harm has been done to our souls that He is not ready to undo. Even to the deepest part of our being, where the eye of God alone sees, where we try vainly to trace back our thoughts and feelings to their source, the purifying virtue of the Saviour reaches. The first stop in the downward path, the first look towards God as One who is grieved by our sin, finds God's mercy.

That mercy is at first chiefly shown in teaching the need of mercy and giving faith and hope to seek it. That hope enlarges, making the prayer for mercy mean more. It seems a great boon that the stroke of God's just wrath is stayed, that we are not to die for our sin. But as those who are forgiven, we feel the goodness of God lead us to a deeper and more active repentance. We hate what has broken down our moral strength, and makes us slow to rise to higher things and to love what is pure and lovely. We loathe the memories of past sin, which we cannot blot from our mind, and we loathe ourselves for the way in which, it may be, those memories are welcomed and dwelt on. When our hearts condemn us, we know that God is greater than our hearts and knoweth all things. We pray Him to let His cleansing grace wash us, till the last mark that old sin has left disappears, and there is nothing in us to revive past evil, or to meet and welcome new temptations.

"*Thou hast delivered my soul from death: wilt not Thou deliver my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living?*"—Ps. lvi. 13.

DAVID knew well that God alone had saved him from the many foes who sought his life. He felt bound and glad to praise God; and he was sure that God would guide and guard the life He had given and had so often snatched from ruin. He rejoiced devoutly, as by faith he saw a way marked for him on which God's Presence shed light and life. When Christ prayed to Him who was able to save Him from death, He was heard. So He passed to the Presence of God, where the ever-living praise Him who is their life and light.

We praise God for the work of Christ, by which we are freed from the hold of death and a new life is ours. The sentence "Thou shalt surely die" is taken from us and laid upon our sin. Sin is killed, and we live, saved by Him whose foe sin is, and who gives us of His own eternal life. The life of God which Christ brought to mankind was made over to us, one by one, when we were "baptized into His death," buried with Him, and raised with Him. We praise God for the grace that quickened us. We rejoice that He who has saved us lives to be our Saviour still. "Partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light," we have the eternal life of those who are living in Christ, and have hope of life with Him.

It is hard to keep upright and move steadily on in the path of life. But Christ is the Way by whom we come to God. He is the Truth, clearing away the darkness of what is untrue and evil. He is the Life, making our souls undying. God is able to keep us from falling. His love is the same as when He first drew near to lift us from our fallen state. We can stand against the worst, to the last, if we only will. For greater is He that is for us than all that can join to cast us down. Each wrestle will prove His truth and our growing strength in Him. Faithful is He that calleth, who also will do it. There is joy in walking with God, mastering sin more and more, knowing that evil dies and that the true life gains power. There is joy in being led by the clear light of Divine truth, and the light of a heart growing more pure so as to see God. What joy in the hope of the light of God, where death and all that leads to it cannot come!

"To see Thy power and Thy glory, so as I have seen Thee in the sanctuary."—Ps. lxiii. 2.

THERE is no place where God is not. Yet He is where He has chosen to set His Name, and where He has called men to meet Him, as He is not elsewhere. Man can, at special times, draw nearer to God than he is at all times. He can feel a power come to him and a love make him glad, over and above that which he can know of always. God sends forth His grace, with new and added power to reveal Him, in those means whereby He has taught men to claim Him as their God. What He gives is beyond price: but His gifts are chiefly precious because they open a way for communion with Him and knowledge of Him. Thus faith can see Him who, though invisible, does so great things with a love that is so glorious in its working.

There is a nearness to God, almost a vision of Him face to face, which belongs to those times when He is in the midst of the two or three assembled in His Name, and the holy place where we worship seems an outer court of the Holy of Holies, where our High Priest has entered for us. Those who have loved the place of God's glory and have been shut off by sickness, or have gone where means of grace are few and strange, find out the worth of what is lost. But even where no place of common prayer is within reach, where there is a want of all that speaks of God, where even all Nature is marred and hidden, God is not less at hand.

We cannot hope for grace, if we wilfully neglect the ways to which God has bound His promises. But if God bring us into the thirsty and barren wilderness, He does not mean us to starve there. He leads us, and in His leading we can see signs of His power and glory. We can find helps to our faith, assuring and comforting, in that they are of a special kind. He will give manna where there is no bread. He will call water out of the rock. While we are bound to seek grace through God's chosen means, yet God gives His grace in what ways He will to those who truly thirst for it. He shows Himself to the soul that looks for Him, that it may enjoy and praise Him, feeling His power to save. We behold God by faith now. We hope to adore Him in His glory, where the river of life flows from the throne of the Most High!

"*Thou, O God, didst send a plentiful rain, whereby Thou didst confirm Thine inheritance, when it was weary.*" Ps. lxviii. 9.

GOD shook the hills where He trod in His march in front of Israel. The storm and flame that burst from the dropping clouds told of His awful Presence and warned back those who might have drawn too near. But He was guarding His own from themselves and from their enemies. His flock was safe under His care. Weary and in want they looked to Him who called them His. He opened His full hand and shook down gifts upon them. The manna fell around their tents, and the wind bore them meat in abundance. So the sheep of His pasture were fed freely, and were folded where the Good Shepherd made all things ready.

In what the God of Israel was we see what our God is. He has bought us at a great price that we may be His inheritance. What God has prepared for them that love Him did not enter into the heart of those who in old time knew Him best. We are His flock, and the Divine Shepherd calls us each by name and brings us where food convenient for us is provided. Heaven is opened, and out of the riches of God's goodness manifold grace is poured down. Poor in spirit, we look in faith to Him who brought us out into the wilderness and has promised to uphold us there; we enjoy richly the privileges of the kingdom of heaven of which God has made us heirs. He fills the hungry with good things, bestowing on us that righteousness which comes from heaven, and fits us for it. His grace is His love coming forth to do us good in all ways. It never fails; the source is God.

There may be desert around us; but Heaven is over us, and God will rain down grace to make our souls thrive. We may be worn and tired; but God will refresh us and make us strong with the gifts of His own loving-kindness. The holy land may seem far off, with more between it and us than we can overpass; but God does not leave us without an earnest and foretaste of the promised good things that we hope for. There are fruits such as grow in that good land; there is the shadow of the Rock, there is the Water of Life springing from it; there is angels' food; there is the Bread of heaven, and the Wine that makes glad man's heart.

"*Thou, which hast showed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth.*"—Ps. lxxi. 20.

CHRIST humbled Himself in obedience to His Father's will; wherefore God exalted Him to the highest place in heaven. While passing through great and sore trouble, He saw, beyond the Cross and the tomb, the glory and power of the risen life. He knew how those who sought His hurt were being used to bring Him to honour.

The Church, like Noah from the flood, like Israel from the Red sea, is saved from what threatens to overwhelm her. And in another way she is saved by being, like them, parted from evil. The foes and trials of the Church do not destroy; they are the means of bringing her to a new and purer state. She learns God's power to help and comfort. Taught obedience in her suffering, she is able to go forward, sure that it is God's will to make her live to His praise for ever.

We do not wonder if the path of each of us is somewhat like that of Him whom we follow. To drink of His cup and be baptized with the same fire through which He passed is part of our following. The rough hardness of the way tells us that it is not the broad way, but the one which leads to life. The floods bid us see to our foundation, that it be deep and firm. Trials warn of sin to be laid aside and weights that check our free movement. God takes away the lesser and the passing good, to make room in our hearts for the greater and everlasting. He lays on us a burden, without which we cannot have the best gifts of grace.

So we patiently abide, in hope that, passing from a world that passes away, we may gain what endures. The outward man perishes, but the inward man, day by day, is renewed from the life of God. God is eternal: we pass from state to state. God changes His way of dealing; but it is the same God, with the same love, who humbles us or lifts us up. He gives, even while He brings low, a closer union with His own life in Christ—a life which is for ever. He comforts with the communion to which He admits the soul in its loneliness. He comforts with the power of grace, which is felt to be strongest when nature fails. He comforts with the hope and foretaste of the better world and of the glory to be revealed.

"*Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt Thou restrain.*" –Ps. lxxvi. 10.

GOD does more than master His foes and save His people; He uses the strength of rebels to make His throne firmer. He rules it so far as it will work good. The remainder, over and above what is destroyed or used for good, He binds so that it can work no harm. Or the meaning may be, He takes it as a girdle, to aid Him in putting forth His might, and to hold His conquering sword. Israel's God was more feared after the overthrow of the Assyrians. The strength of those who defied Him gave glory to Him at whose quiet touch they slept in death. Those who sought Daniel's life led men to own with awe the power and faithfulness of Daniel's God. The wrath of those who caused the three children to be cast into the fire was the means of making their God's Name glorious far and near. One like unto the Son of God proved God able to save all who are true to Him. The wrath that heaped shame and outrage on the Crucified made brighter the crown of the risen Lord.

So it is always. The greater the strength against God, the more triumphant is His victory. The more fiercely the waves rage and dash upon the rock, the more does their roaring proclaim the firmness that turns them aside and stirs not. Times of peace are not times when God is clung to and served with truest zeal. When what is dear to us is threatened we learn how dear it is. We prize what costs care and work to keep. We do not know what God is to us, till we have to choose between Him and His foes. Our faith and love, made thoughtful and earnest in trial, glorify Him.

How is truth made clear and spread abroad? Is it not that each part of truth has been assailed? We have had to know what indeed God had said, and for what He claims faith. The wrath of man has been the means of giving us a purer doctrine, more clearly known, more firmly held. And so with our life, which that doctrine rules. Peril drives us back on God for grace and leading, with more humility and more trust. We are called and enabled to live more for Him, so that men seeing our good works glorify our Father. A common danger binds us to one another, so that by our union we do more for God, and win men to faith.

"O Lord God of hosts, how long wilt Thou be angry with Thy people that prayeth?"—Ps. lxxx. 4.

GOD'S anger with His people is not like that which His foes are made to feel. Nor are His judgments on His people the same, when they forsake Him, and when they turn to seek His face in prayer. God is jealous of the love of those who have known what His love is. He is jealous for their good. The courage is ready to fail, when faith can only say "We are Thy people, and we pray," and the temptation rises to fear how long the power to go on praying will last. The trial is hard when we have only the bread of tears, instead of the refreshments of God's favour.

But God does so provide in His own wise way for the soul's strength and joy. He chastens to bring back into safety, and He chastens lest we turn away again to the paths of sin and death. If we have good hope that God has turned us, giving us the grace of repentance and of longing after Him, this is joy enough to dwell on for a while. Though clouds hide Him still, we may rejoice in the Lord, whose face shines towards us. We are His people: if we claim Him as our God, He will for His Name's sake help and bless His own.

But He must judge how far and how soon to let us enjoy the feeling of His favour. We must trust His knowledge of our needs. Humbled by our sins, we dare not claim to be free at once and wholly from what reminds us of them. Enough that the Divine voice says, "Son, thy sins be forgiven." We wait patiently and in good cheer till the same voice bids us leave our bed of pain. Enough that the Saviour tells us of Paradise with Him. We are thankful, even though the cross must hold us to the end, lest Paradise be lost. We have been prodigals and must, perhaps, be kept low all the way home; yet we must be glad that our Father has seen us, and met us with a loving welcome, and is guiding us homeward. "If need be, we are in heaviness;" but it is only "for a season." We may ask "How long?" We are right to plead with God that soon the discipline may have done its work. We are right to ask how we can better be "exercised" thereby, that so we may sooner and more fully be partakers of God's holiness.

"*Show me a token for good; that they which hate me may see it, and be ashamed: because Thou, Lord, hast holpen me, and comforted me.*"—Ps. lxxxvi. 17.

THE prayer is full of sure hope. He who prays comes to the Lord of all, as one who by birth has a servant's claim for care and goodness. So Christ saw before Him the signs given in His resurrection and glory, which proved Him to be safely in God's hands. It is a prayer for all who seem left to be a scoff for those who have no fear of God. It breathes more of jealousy for God's honour than even of care for the peace of him who prays. It seeks for such a token as may warn and shame into repentance those who wrong God's servant. It seeks not only for that which may change the state and feeling of the sufferer, but for that by which His foes may learn that God is true to His own.

Prosperity is not a proof of the Divine favour. God is well pleased with those who bear well the cross and shame; but faith's trial is hard when the world tempts with the sneer that "It is vain to serve God." We are sure of God and of the life where endless good awaits those who endure. But we pray that we may not be tempted above that we are able, or be a stumblingblock to others. We let our requests be known to Him, bowing to His will. He may bless the means we use, and free us from our trials; or He may bestow such power to do and bear as will prove that we are not alone. We own that God is with us, when we are saved from some great loss or harm. But the token for good is as plain when we are able to be calm in the midst of what seems hopeless ruin. This awes into silence those who walk by sight.

God often helps where He withholds consolations. Those to whom He is nearest do not always see Him most clearly, or feel most the joy He gives. We are not wrong to pray for that peace of faith and joy of hope, and sweetness in communion with God, that make up for the want of outward quiet and worldly good. But it is a higher witness of the Spirit's presence to be able to go on, even though God's face seems turned away, and we feel left alone in the darkness. Spiritual comfort is enough, even when all other comfort fails. Spiritual help is indeed a token that God is with us for our good, when it upholds us while consolations are denied.

"Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us: and establish Thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish Thou it."—Ps. xc. 17.

THE Lord is our God. We are the work of His hands. We are marred indeed, for through sin we are not what God first made man to be. But it is God's will that we should be reformed in His likeness and make known His glory in what we are and what we do. The beauty of the Lord is the shining forth of His being in its holiness and love. All light and power in us are from Him. His grace comes before any good that can show itself in our natures or our lives.

By the work of our hands is meant the whole putting forth of energy of thought and will and deed. God calls it our work; for we are responsible for the right use of our freedom in doing or not doing, and in the manner of it. Yet all the work is God's; for even that free will is His gift, and we are dependent upon His prevenient grace. We pass away, but only from the eyes of those we leave on earth; and nothing that has told upon our character fails to leave its impress on our undying selves. Our work seems to perish; but if it be wrought in God it is but buried like a foundation which will make the after-work of others firm. So we get back to the opening words of the psalm, and among all the decay and passingness of a dying world we cling in faith to Him who is the same from generation to generation. God remains, and so does all His work.

And we are not asked to toil and suffer for a good in time to come, in which we shall have no part. The future is ours, if we are living and working in union with the Everlasting. We shall have our place in the generations to come; for we shall live on, and the Lord shall in our new state be still our God, and the fruit of our doings we shall see in our own nature. And all that God does here by us beyond our own selves shall there be shown, with the work of others added to it, setting forth for ever the glory of our God. He alone can make our work of faith and labour of love prosper. We pray Him to stablish our work by giving us the high pure aim which befits those who work for God and as fellow-workers with Him. We pray Him to own and bless what is done as His work, which shall endure.

"*O sing unto the Lord a new song: sing unto the Lord, all the earth.*"—Ps. xcvi. 1.

IN this psalm God's people praised Him when the second temple was dedicated. But they knew not all the meaning of the words they used, as we have learned them. They did not think of the nations of the earth being gathered into one spiritual kingdom of the Messiah, and of the Divine Presence being made known to worshippers "in every place." We use the psalm, rejoicing before God for the building of a Temple. That Temple is being reared of living stones, gathered from all the earth. In every tongue God's praise is told. All kindreds of the world unite to glorify His Name and to make known His salvation.

We do not keep our blessings or our joy in worship to ourselves. That would be to lose them by separating from Him to whom we owe them. We call others to share the good that we have found; we hold up the light in dark places; we guide the thirsty to refreshing streams. We seek to show, by our gladness in God, that He is a God whom it is joy to know and serve. Our zeal to spread the knowledge of the grace of God in Christ is the proof how far that grace is known and prized by us. If the Light has lightened us, we will let our light shine, that men may glorify Him whose children our lives and works prove us to be. So far as we receive His love, we shall love Him and love men. We shall not rest from work and prayer, while any are putting that love from them, and are giving to His rivals the thought and praise which He claims. We seek that all men may have all good, and that God's may be all the praise.

Our song is new, a better song than Israel sang of old. God is nearer to us; His salvation is more clearly revealed. Grace and truth have come by Jesus Christ. That is ours which God's people of old hoped for, and only saw by faith dimly. And our song is new, in that the renewing Spirit changes our hearts, and makes our worship a more holy offering. As new creatures in Christ Jesus, led by the Spirit of God, we rejoice before the Lord. We meditate and we pray, that we may sing with growing understanding of the glory of our theme, and that our lives may be in harmony with the worship of our lips.

"Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases."—PS. ciii. 3.

WHEN God is made known to us as the Holy One, our hearts fail. How can we in our guilt stand before Him? How can we in our manifold weakness ever hope to rise out of sin so as to please Him? Because He is holy, we can be holy. He is a God who hates sin and loves us. He forgives sin more readily than we dislodge it from its stronghold in our hearts, and strive not to love it. His mercy seeks to give back our lost strength, and to make the springs of our spiritual life pure and healthy. For He is a "faithful Creator," ever true to those whom He has made. He is, moreover, a Father and a friend in Christ to those whom He has redeemed, and called to be His sons and daughters.

God is love, and to those who need pardon His love takes the form of mercy. He met us with forgiveness when we came into the world. He called us to Him, that by union with the Saviour we might be saved from the guilt of our birth sin, and new born into a state of grace. And when we fall, He is near to lift us up; when we seek Him from the ways of sin into which we have wandered, He comes to meet us with a Father's forgiveness. He does not coldly spare; He takes us to His heart. He does not leave us to go on in fear, with some sin still calling out for punishment. Even that which we overlook or have forgotten He forgives, when we lay our souls before Him, confessing what we can.

He who forgives makes whole, and bids us go and sin no more. The good Physician keeps us in His care. It is when we try to please Him whose mercy has blotted out our sin, that we find how weak we are. We fear when we feel the flesh weak and the spirit only half willing, when in our ignorance and inexperience we scarce know what to do and how to do it. But the healing work goes on, so long as we, with true though weak will, strive to gain and use the saving helps of the Saviour's grace. Not in this life shall that work be perfected; but while we trust in Him who forgives, we are cared for by Him who heals; and while we abide under the care of the Divine Healer, the imperfections of life and nature are all forgiven.

"*Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.*"
Ps. cv. 15.

ABRAHAM was called to go forth alone, believing the Divine word. God's oath made the promise sure to Isaac, and the everlasting covenant was confirmed to Jacob. "Few men in number, yea, very few," moved at God's bidding from land to land. Strangers among strange and wild peoples, they bore with them the blessing which was to bring good to all the families of the earth. God's mark was upon them; the holy trust, which was theirs to guard, kept them safe. Pharaoh and Abimelech were warned that he who wronged them must dare the might of Him who sent them. The anointing of the Holy One gave a knowledge of Divine truth which made them brave in going forward. They saw the day of Christ and were glad. And they feared no evil, knowing that God's work in their hands could not fail.

God has His anointed now. He chooses and sends forth those who receive His revelation of truth that they may make it known. There are special gifts of the Spirit which belong to those who are called to be ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. But the same Spirit has diversities of gifts; and all who have a part in receiving are entrusted also with the task of making felt in the world the influence of their grace and knowledge. We are, each in his own place and for his own work, the anointed of the Lord, on whom the Holy Spirit has come. We are "taught of God" that we may teach. The Spirit witnesses with our spirit that we are under the fatherly care of God, while that Spirit leads us in the way of the Divine will.

He who has made the great of the earth feel that in persecuting the least of His people they persecuted Him, keeps watch always over those who are called to His work. The treasure is in earthen vessels, which fail. The commission is passed from hand to hand. Men die and receive not the promise. But each faithful one has the Divine protection and blessing while he does his part. No harm can touch him, so as to take from him his glory and his hope. When all is fulfilled, he finds that as he shared the work, so he has part in the glory.

"*He sent His word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions.*"—PS. cvii. 20.

THE Psalmist calls those of whom he speaks "fools." They did not obey God's laws or their own sense of right; and so brought on themselves the reward of their foolishness. They sought God when judgment humbled them, and they found mercy. How many are there now who eat of the fruit of past sin and thoughtlessness! Health is broken down; life is made bare of joy and peace. They can tell how they have sown what they are reaping. A weakened body clogs the mind, and is vantage ground for many a fierce temptation.

Often the sickness which warns of death reminds of sin and stirs up to pray. Many a soul was brought to Christ, that might never have known His saving power, had not the body needed Him as a healer. And so it is now. We sin in thoughtlessness; then some sorrow makes us thoughtful: we cry to our Saviour; He bids us go in peace and sin no more. Even if the consequence of our sin remains, He heals us of our sin, and saves our souls from death.

We do not live by bread, but by the Word of God. And when our spiritual or natural life is low and weak, we are not healed by the means we use, but by the will of Him who does in His own way what He wills. God has sent the eternal Word to heal men. Christ healed the sick as a sign that the Son of Man has power on earth to give health to souls. He works now in all those ministries of mercy which are carried on in His Name and for the love of Him. Still, as of old, He heals the sick in mind and body, as He proclaims the gospel and is the Physician of souls.

We all fail in spiritual strength through past sin and foolishness. We are weak in soul, and sometimes as if at the point to die. We have more or less lost our desire for grace by our neglect and misuse of it. We fail in relish for the spiritual food by which our union with God's life is kept up and made strong. Each power is languid, even the power to call on God. But Christ is "present to heal" even what is most plainly the work of our own folly. He will help us to cry to the Lord, and He will hear us. He will save us from ourselves, so that sin shall not be our ruin. He will make us whole, and give us length of days, even for ever and ever.

"*He hath given meat unto them that fear Him: He will ever be mindful of His covenant.*"—Ps. cxi. 5.

GOD'S works declare Him. From each we may learn something of what He unchangeably is. Each mighty work which God wrought for Israel marked them as His own people, bound to His service; and told them of a claim which His grace gave them to trust Him as their God. He sent them out of Egypt laden with meat, or "spoil." He fed them in the wilderness with angels' food, binding them in covenant with Him and pledging Himself to them. He taught them to keep the Feast of the Passover before Him, maintaining and renewing their rights in that Church which clung to the promises which were its prized inheritance.

We are in covenant with our Creator. He who has given us life will not fail in the lesser gifts by which He upholds us. In every one He reminds us that it is He that keeps our soul in life, and claims the duty which we acknowledge by taking His mercies. Till we place ourselves outside the covenant, that covenant stands. God is mindful of us as His creatures whom He is pledged to care for in time and in eternity, while we remember Him as One whose will we must obey. In all our prayers we act upon the rights which His covenant of mercy has given us; and we renew our assent to the conditions under which those rights are enjoyed.

We have our passover, like God's Church of old. We are given the "meat" indeed, a sure token to us that our spiritual foes are "spoiled." The fruit of the victory of God is ours. Christ tells us of the new testament or covenant made sure anew between God and us, when with reverent surrender of ourselves, our souls and bodies, we receive the Living Bread, and drink of the Cup of Life. We show forth the sacrifice of the true Paschal Lamb, while we eat before God of that Divine nourishment. We unite ourselves with Him who is the Mediator of the new covenant. We plead for the fulfilment of His covenant in the bestowal of strength and refreshment, to revive our faith and hope, and to enable us for more devoted works of love. Redeemed at such a cost, we should pass the time of our sojourning in fear. In covenant with God who is mindful of all to whom He has given promises, we may pray and live in thankful quiet trust.

"*Praise the Lord, all ye nations: praise Him, all ye people.*"
Ps. cxvii. 1.

GOD has made all things for Himself. He seeks those who will make His glory known, showing what His love makes them. He cares for the nations that are ignorant of the source from which all their good comes. He is never failing in His forbearance to those who sin in blindness, till His light shines to show them the better way. He is true, beyond all their thought of the meaning of His promises, to those whom He has received into covenant and made to trust His word. He shows mercy also to those of His chosen people who have not risen to their high calling.

None are outside the reach of His mercy who have not finally put Him from them; none fail to find His word kept who have received and trusted it. In Christ the mercy and the truth of God come to men. The power of the work of Christ reaches among those who have never heard His Name. He is the Mediator, the way of union between God and His creatures in more ways than man thinks, by means which the far-spreading mercy of God has planned. Christ is for ever; and His work, as it brought blessings to those who lived long before He took flesh, so will be the cause of good to men through eternity.

The nations newly called to know and enjoy the Divine mercy, praise God with a fresh warmth full of a sort of adoring wonder that such good should come to them. The people of God, who have long proved the truth of Him whose loving mercies never fail, praise Him in a calmer strain. There is this difference in the words used. As feelings deepen and thought is full, modes of expression tend to grow more quiet, though they mean more, and tell of greater love.

God has called us to be of His people, who have His promises pledged for ever. We can hold fast to His truth, and show that His grace is sure. So our life must be a never silent offering of praise. And as we learn more of what He is in His love and truth, we shall be earnest in seeking that all may know Him and all may give Him honour. Our praise fails, nay, it is untrue, unless we are doing our part in spreading the light of the Gospel among the heathen, and also in rousing the Church of God to earnestness of work and praise.

"*I will walk at liberty: for I seek Thy precepts.*"—Ps. cxix. 45.

THE pure in heart see God by faith, and walk in His light. The way is made plain to those who honestly wish to know and to do God's will. They who seek to please God walk at liberty, or, as the word means, "in a wide place" or "at large." His service is perfect freedom; for when His rule is chosen all rivals are put away. While we are true to Him, we feel no inward misgiving and no shame before men. We move and act trustfully as He guides us. We fear no evil; for we know that so long as we serve Him, He will make all things serve us.

Those who shake off God's light yoke put on a heavy one. Those who live free from the wholesome restraints of righteousness work for the wages of sin. No holy and loving and Divine will guides them. They are driven by their own vain desires, which grow more tyrannical as they are indulged, till the whole man is brought into bondage. Conscience warns that God has rights which He can enforce. So even while they boast of liberty, they are slaves of sin and rebels against their rightful Lord. Those again who are half-hearted lose the happy freedom which belongs to those who seek God's precepts guilelessly.

Jacob and David felt through all their lives the lash of their sin. Though forgiven, they did not forgive themselves, and their fault had put them in the power of men. We dread such forms of bondage; we choose to be in God's care and under His rule. We would not obey Him as One whose wrath we dread, or think of Him as One whom at our peril we must serve. We would live before Him, looking up with the spirit of adoption, seeking to know His will that we may please ourselves by doing it. We pray to Him to write His law on our hearts, that obeying Him may become more and more glad, free, and natural. We draw near as He is made known in Christ. To that meek and lowly Teacher we come, that we may learn of Him and take His yoke upon us. So we find rest from the anxious fears and wanderings which come from obeying our own weak will. We go forward, watching at each step for the Divine voice, trying ever to know the perfect will of God, that we may obey more perfectly, and so may enjoy more perfect freedom.

"Therefore I esteem all Thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way."—Ps. cxix. 128.

THE sin of those who make void God's law must not dull the conscience or cool the zeal of His servants. The law holds good with all its strong claim, however men forget and defy it. A jealous God will not for ever hold His peace. We watch the Divine dealings, and faith in God makes us trust, where we cannot trace His hand and explain His ways. Though we have still to learn the reason and meaning of much that is laid upon us, we do not need to ask why God is to be obeyed. We know that He is just and holy; our obedience is not to one or another law, but to the one Lawgiver.

The precepts of God teach the whole of our duty in every least matter. They warn away from every fault, they point to each step in the path, and show how to act always. Nothing is forbidden which has not in it harm or shame. Nothing is commanded which is not just and good and full of promise. No aimless care or sorrow is laid upon our strength. We do not see always how the manifold will of God bears upon our duty in its manifold details. But we take that will as our rule, bowing in lowly self-distrust before God. We love to remember that He thus stands over us with kind, firm care, putting His will between our souls and evil, and giving to us a perfect standard of what is right. We pray and strive that our heart and aim be true, however we may feel that we have still much light and grace to gain.

Jesus Christ the righteous, whose example inspires us while it humbles us, is the propitiation for our shortcomings, and our Saviour from them. We show our love for God's law and for Him by whose grace we can obey it, by aiming to be perfect and complete in all the will of God. We do not know all the reasons for any precept. We dare not say which may be safely disobeyed. It is not for us to ask God to waive one of His laws to suit our views or wishes. We obey God's precepts because they are God's and we are His servants. They are right because God is right. He is one, and His will is one, and cannot be divided. We hate all that would make our service a broken, imperfect thing. We hate every way, however approved by the world's custom, which would show us untrue to God.

"*Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee.*"—Ps. cxxii. 6.

IF we love God, it is because He first loved us. The grace and truth that came by Jesus Christ have enabled us to know and love God as our Father. It is as members of God's Church that God's blessings are our inheritance. We know not how to draw near till we are taught. We cannot see the movements of grace; we know not how to mark its coming, till God tells us of the outward signs that make us sure. We love the house of worship, where we meet with those who have like hope in the same God, and seek from Him the good things which are our common treasure. We love all the means by which light is given to our minds and grace comes to our souls. If that love be true and active, we must prosper; for God's love which has roused it in us will meet us with all good.

We grieve when the faults of men seem to check the activity of God's love in His Church, and unbelief spoils unity in faith and work. We pray that Christ's words, "Peace be unto you," may come with new power, making His Church one, that she may win the world to the obedience of the faith. She cannot always have peace such as the world gives; nor would it be well for her to be deceived by that which is no peace. In the world she must have tribulation, as each of her members must. Her peace is that which Christ gives, who has overcome the world, and it depends upon union with Him.

We pray that the peace of God may keep His Church calm and steadfast for her work of faith and labour of love. We pray that her members may with one heart and one mind strive together for the faith. We seek the peace of Jerusalem in all we do, as well as in our prayers. We aim at the glory of God in the triumph of His love. We would help to heal division in His Church, that His grace may have free course to win the world to receive the treasures of His truth. We would lead others by our prayers and example to seek the blessing of those who work with God in the cause of His Gospel. We shall prosper in all highest ways, as we set before us the end at which Divine love aims, and use with humble thankfulness the means which Divine love ordains.

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"—Ps. cxxxiii. 1.

THE temple and its worship united God's people. They united at the yearly feasts, and thought of their common history and hopes. They took part in the same holy rites. In their scattered homes they still prayed towards Jerusalem, and joined in heart with the worship offered there. Jeroboam knew the power of this bond, and separated the ten tribes from the worship at Jerusalem, lest they should go back to union with their brethren. A fellowship founded on our relations to God and eternity is strong. If God be our common Father, and heaven our common home, we are bound to show ourselves brethren.

We were "baptized into one Body;" we have one hope of our calling, one faith. We ought to be, like the believers of old, "of one heart and one soul," "of one accord and of one mind," and, as far as may be, "in one place." The unity of which the psalm speaks is an outward manifestation of what is inward and spiritual, the goodness and pleasantness of which can be seen. We are not only to be at one when together, but to dwell together to show that we are one, and to become more united. We are to "speak the same thing," "with one mind and one mouth to glorify God." We must do our part to heal divisions and gather the scattered, seeking the blessing of the peacemakers.

Unity is good in itself; for God is the author not of confusion but of peace. It is good for us. We are upheld and cheered when those who hold the same faith join us in avowing it; when those who seek the same country go with us as fellow-pilgrims; when those who work for the same end, in the same strength, labour with us. There is great power in that worship which is offered with one heart and voice by those who name the Name of Christ. How life's griefs are softened and God's consolations made more blessed, when the strong help the weak, and no one is left lonely! And how strong is the witness which that union and brotherhood give before the world! We share one life, if our souls live. We ought to love more to be partakers of the one Bread at our Father's table. We ought to seek closer union in Christ, which may be seen to be good and pleasant.

"See if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."—Ps. cxxxix. 24.

GOD knows us well. There is nothing in the deepest place of our heart, which is hid from Him who weighs our every feeling and wish and aim. The most fleeting thought that flashes across our minds is before Him in its full, plain meaning. If we do the truth, and seek without guile that all our deeds may be wrought in God, then it comforts us to be sure that He knows us better than we know ourselves. God does not flatter or deceive, as He cannot err. It is His will that we should adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. Here is our great rest and hope, when we find how frail our hearts are, and how evil lurks where we least look for it.

We want to see in God's light. We want to know our hearts, even if that means to be shamed and humbled. We want to know our thoughts, not as they seem to us, but as what God sees they are. We hate every wicked way; and we would learn what in us God judges to be wicked, that we may turn from it, however loved and pleasant. We would be led in the way everlasting, one with Him who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, at any cost to our own pride or love of ease. We pray that we may know along with God, and will along with God, and go forward with a true heart, guided by God's hand. Close and painful must God's searching often be, to lay bare the secret workings of low and wrong desire, the love of self, the want of charity, that are at the root of what seems a fair and fruitful life.

How good it is to be able to trust God, and to be true and open with Him! If we wish to be right, He will show us where we go astray. If we wish to be strong, He will show us where we are weak. If we hate sin, He will give us clearness of conscience to see it in us, and firmness of will to cast it out. If we long for holiness, He will guide us step by step, drawing us into closer following of Christ and closer union with Him. We are glad that He knows all He seeks our good and will bring us to it. The sense of sin which we have is a sign that He hears our souls' cry for light and guidance. He is gentle and fatherlike; He will spare us sorrow if He can; but He will not risk our souls' failure or loss for the sake of short ease and rest.

"*The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon Him, to all that call upon Him in truth.*"—Ps. cxlv. 18.

GOD is not far from every one of us. None seek Him in vain. He meets with blessing those who draw nigh to Him as their God. True souls find Him more than near: He is with and in them, drawing their faith to Himself, and giving them right desires. He teaches them to ask what His grace waits to give. When He lets them wait long, or even does not grant their prayer, He is no less nigh. He gives more and better things than are in their thoughts; He fills them with good, the worth of which He knows, and will show them in His time. Those who feel unworthy to draw near are met with compassion while still a great way off. God bends down in mercy to those who, like the publican, fear to lift their eyes to heaven.

If we would pray aright, we need a right faith. The God on whom we call must be God as He reveals Himself. We dare not turn from Him to one whom our own thoughts have fashioned. As we know God from God's own teaching, so we learn from Him how to call on Him. We are careful to worship the one true God in the true ways which are according to His will. Humility and obedience are parts of the truth which God claims. The call of the lips is vain, unless it tell the true desire of the heart and be in harmony with the aim of the life. We call on God in truth when we pray in the Name of Christ, as His members, who are one with Him in will, and seek the same ends.

We know that God is nigh; for we have heard His call without us and within us. He will bestow all grace which He bids us have. He will make us more than all that He teaches us to long to be. Our call on Him is the answer to His call to us, which comes in many ways and various tones. The life of faith, which is a ceaseless calling on Him, is an answer to the comings of His grace. He is nigh to lead our wandering desires aright, and to rule our wayward wills. He is nigh to give what is good of this life's pleasant things, and to guard from trials which would not help, but harm us. He is nigh to make us true to Him and to ourselves, to teach us truth, to make clear our faith, to enlarge our hope, to draw us ever nearer to Him in that love by which true souls know Him.

"*Salvation belongeth unto the Lord: Thy blessing is upon Thy people.*"—Ps. iii. 8.

THERE is all help for us in our God. All that can make and keep us safe is from Him. By whatever means salvation reaches us, He is the Source and Giver, to whom it all is owing. To Him we look to guard us from the common ills of life, or to make them serve our good. He gives His angels charge to keep His people, and puts within men the good-will and the power to befriend one another.

His arm has wrought salvation for the lost. He gave His Son to die and rise and live as our Saviour. He has "saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost." He has brought us into union with the Saviour's life, that we might have part in the merit and the power of His saving work. The first movement of spiritual life within us was from Him. On Him we wait for grace to will and do, so as to work out the salvation which is to be revealed in the last time, and be crowned with the glory which He will bestow. For all that helps and strengthens and gladdens our souls we give Him praise.

None can rob us of that salvation which the Almighty means for us, so long as we fall in with His plan of love, and yield to Him as our Lord and Saviour. He keeps all who are faithful so that they are safe from harm, and He pours out blessings ever rich and new on those who trust Him and obey Him as their God. He saves that He may bless with all good: His blessing is the going forth of His love, that the work of salvation may be finished.

The unspeakable gift of Christ, in whom as the Mediator dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead, leaves nothing unprovided. Through Him pass all grace and blessing to His members. While we abide in living union with Him, we need fear no evil and lack no good. While we seek for and will to use the powers of life and godliness thus brought so near, the boundless resources of grace are open to us. Well may we rejoice that all these are for our sakes. Heaven is rich in store of blessing ready to be poured out, as we are able and willing to receive it. That will and power are tokens of salvation and promises of eternal blessing.

"The poor committeth himself unto Thee; Thou art the helper of the fatherless."—Ps. x. 14.

THOUGH all help of man prove vain and fail us, we are not at the mercy of that which would do us harm. We are not indeed poor, while God is left, and heaven with all its store of good is His. We are not lonely while the Divine Friend is near, and we can trust in Him whose strong kind arms uphold and shield us.

God is the source of each form of human loving-kindness: so we have in Him all that is meant in a father's protection and wise counsel and in a mother's tender consolations. Christ brought nigh to us and showed in its endless variety the infinite love of God. He met as brother and sister and mother those who willed to do His Father's will. From His heart came that many-sided love which more than made up to His followers for the loss of all whom they left for His sake. It was the love of God, as the man Christ Jesus gave it human expression. He said to those who were filled with sorrow at the thought of losing Him, "I will not leave you orphans, I will come unto you." And now He is ever proving those words true during all the days of His Church's trial. He is with each one who will open the door of thought and love and welcome Him to dwell in the nature and rule the life. He gives to the friendless faith to say in His own words, "I am not alone, because the Father is with me." He is a Divine Presence, assuring of Almighty help. Who can overpower or harm those who have God so nigh? Of what can we stand in need if Christ be ours? He is that unspeakable gift, the pledge that our Father will freely give us all things. Our helplessness makes the care of God to be more felt as a real and sure ground of confidence.

Oh to be more poor in spirit, so as to gain a firmer place in the kingdom of heaven and to be able to draw more largely on the treasures of grace! Oh to lean with a more quiet childlike peace upon the wise and strong and gentle fatherhood of God! Blessed be His Name for the faith He gives, and for what little we have yet learned of that love which none can, through all eternity, find out to perfection!

"*Thou wilt show me the path of life.*"—Ps. xvi. 11.

WHERE God's will led, Christ went on. He was not moved by the roughness of the way: enough for Him that it was God's way. He saw death before Him, but this did not turn Him from the path of obedience. Through death He would find life, and would win everlasting life for dying men. He is the Life; He is "a quickening Spirit." He made Himself known as the Way and the Truth, teaching us what life means, leading us to the full possession and enjoyment of it.

We can know Him now by faith, and in Him we are shown the Father. Knowing God thus, we find the way to God. There is a broad path along which the crowd goes; but it is a lonely way, for it is without God. In it men lose the life that comes from God. In it men walk in darkness, not knowing whither, till they find that it has led to death. What is good and pure and divine in them withers, till at last the whole being has died from God. In this path men need no guiding; it is the path in which our wayward wills bring us, if left to themselves.

We would seek and follow the path of life, the way in which those walk who are alive unto God, in union with Jesus Christ our Lord. That way is narrow, hard to find, and easy to lose; needing watchfulness, step by step, and earnest perseverance to the end. We do not complain, for it is the path of life, and leads away from all that has to do with death. While we keep in that path we are safe. God set us forward in it when by His Spirit He made us members of Christ, and so sharers in His endless life. And now He gives us the light of Divine truth and grace. We can know that God counts us among the living who shall never die.

Christ has lived showing us "an example, that we should follow in His steps." More than this, He lives in us to give the will and power to walk in the way of God's will. For each one there is the inward light and the outward leading. For each day's need there is new help, full and sure, to make our path plain. Only let us look up in faith, always ready to learn and to obey. So shall we go forward with a glad hope. Enough if we are kept in the path of life and brought at last to the enjoyment of the fulness of life with God.

"Who can understand his errors? cleanse Thou me from secret faults."—Ps. xix. 12.

IN many things we all offend. We own this frankly; for our hearts charge us with much shortcoming and transgression. But it is hard for us to judge how many or how evil our sins are. That which alarms and shames us is not always the worst form of evil. We may grow so used to sins that they seem to us slight weaknesses, or even become matters of course in our daily life. Conscience, when not heeded, tires of giving warning. We may willingly become blind and harden ourselves in evil.

But the most watchful are apt to fail, and to let faults grow into habits. Sin often wears the look of virtue, and needs close searching to find it out. It mixes with what is good, and does its corrupting work unseen. There are inward faults of soul, which are hidden from those who live closest to us, and which we hardly mark ourselves. There are weaknesses, showing, perhaps, how neglect of grace has left us wanting in force or skill. There are sins of ignorance, due, perhaps, to past idleness or inattention. Motives are not pure; aims are not the highest; claims of duty are not fully met; light and grace are neither sought nor used with right earnestness.

Thank God if He gives us a wise will not only to be clear in our own eyes and in the eyes of men, but before Him who knoweth all things. We are glad that nothing escapes Him, for we wish to keep nothing which offends our Father and hinders the Saviour's work. We are glad that God claims faultless holiness of heart and character, for we know that to this He wills to bring us. He has spared not His Son, and has given us the earnest of the Spirit.

God's law is perfect; but who is perfect after its standard? That is no less than what was in God's mind when man was formed in the Divine image. Faith and hope cheer us, as we pray to the Source and Giver of holiness, to whom all hearts are open and from whom no secrets are hid. He will give us more clearness of spiritual sight, and more quick tenderness of conscience. He will cleanse us, by making us more one with Christ, whose perfect manhood shows what we are not, and is the promise of what we may become.

"The meek shall He guide in judgment; and the meek shall He teach His way."—PS. XXV. 9.

THE Lord is good and upright. He is ever acting so as to win all to the enjoyment of the blessing which is the lot of the righteous. So He does not will to leave sinners in their sins. He makes plain the path of salvation for those who know their sins and own them meekly. He is ready to give meekness, and the good things which are the portion of the meek. The meek are those who place and leave themselves in the hands of God, that He may do with them as He wills.

God calls upon and tests our meekness in many ways, proving how far we trust Him. We have, like our Lord, to bear trials, which are laid on us by the hands of men, and which seem strange and aimless. Gifts of grace are held out to us, of which we know the worth only from His Word, veiled as they are under outward forms which have no look of promise in them. Truths claim our faith which are too high and great for our minds to understand. Laws are given as a rule of life, of which we cannot guess the purpose, and which are hard and humbling to obey.

If we are wisely meek, we believe what God says, take what He gives, and do what He commands, in the spirit of a child. So we follow the meek and lowly Master in His path of obedience. We wisely let God have His way with us, that He may keep us from all harm and enrich us with all good. Led by the hand of the God of judgment, we do not err from the way of right. He takes our part against all that would scare us aside or mislead us. He judges us, chastening us with wise care, thus purifying us for the last great judgment.

When He has freed us from the pride which withstands Him, we are able to see that His way is holy and just and good. What He does with us and bids us do makes us wise unto salvation. We learn how to go on in God's way to God's reward. We welcome His teaching. We yield to each pressure of His hand which restrains and shapes us. We grow more quick to catch His meaning and obey the least sign of His will. Thus we prove the blessedness of the meek, whom God teaches and guides, till they are called to inherit the new earth in which dwelleth righteousness.

"Thou art my God. My times are in Thy hand."
Ps. xxxi. 14, 15.

WHEN the soul of Christ was in darkness, and He felt forsaken, He still could say, "My God." There was One on whom He could call, whom He knew as His own God, whose might and love were for Him. Thus He kept His hold on God. His work had to go on till God saw that it was finished. When the power of darkness was to seem to triumph for a while, He said, "Thy will be done." He looked onward to the times and the seasons in which God's plan should be worked out to the end.

So in our loneliest darkest time, when all seems gone, we still have our God left. Though the shining of His face be hidden, and the tempter taunt us, asking, "Where is now thy God?" we know that Christ's Father is our Father, and His God our God. One with Christ, we wait as Christ did. We strengthen our faith by reaching towards Him with words of confidence. We dwell in thought on the meaning of the truth that He is God and that He is ours. He is a God nigh at hand. He owns us, and will in due time prove to our experience what He asks our faith to take upon His word. His hand never lets us go, or lets anything happen by chance or apart from His will. He knows how each act of ours or of others needs to be dealt with and overruled.

Our Father, without whom no sparrow falls, fixed our time of entering upon life and gives us our number of days of trial. He measures how long our times of joy or grief shall last. He rules the pain and loss of which our own fault is the cause. He orders all the changes of our lot, so as to do the best for us in the end. Our folly and wilfulness do not take us from His hand. No enemy can have power over us, save when and so far as God wills to let us be proved.

Only let us claim God always as our God, and seek to be led by Him in each turning of our life's course. Then in times of joy, the light that gladdens us will shine more brightly as the blessing of our God; and in times of sorrow, we can wait for the hour when Heaven shall shine down on us again. Herein is our blessedness, that we are not in our own hands, or in the hands of any but the God of love and wisdom and might, who is our God.

"*Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens; and Thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds.*"—Ps. xxxvi. 5.

THE wicked do not see God; He is not in all their thoughts. They know not of the good they lose or of the ruin which in their blind folly they provoke. They seem to have their own wilful way, and they boast that the world falls more into their hands. But strong and busy though evil may be, its power is held in firm check, and it lasts only for a short time. We know this; for by faith we see more than goes on before the eyes of bold unbelief. This world is not all: man is not the highest being, free and unaccountable.

From the confusion of earth we turn our thoughts to heaven, where God watches and rules. His mercy is in the heavens, for He is there. He fills all things with His presence. From the place of His special glory His infinite mercy goes forth over all that He has made. His faithfulness reaches beyond where man can interfere. What He promises He will do; no power of evil can thwart Him or come between His help and those who trust in Him. The angels of His mercy are sent forth with the authority of Divine love. The ladder by which the messengers of God's goodness and the pleadings of His people pass is fixed too firmly to be shaken. No true prayer can be stopped in its upward course. No gift of grace can be turned aside from the soul that waits for it.

Trust in His faithfulness gives wings to prayer, and lifts the desires of His people towards the mercy-seat in the heavens. Faith can see the bow of promise in the clouds, telling of the light of that mercy which, though often hidden, always shines. We shall not know the glory of the Divine mercy till we see God who is love, when we are with Him where He is. But what hides heaven from us does not shut us off from the help and defence of God's mercy. God makes His goodness to pass before us while we are being trained to behold His glory. And God in His faithfulness makes the sacraments and ministrations of His Church full of blessings which our faith can take. So we can gain the cheer and help of grace, being refreshed and made fruitful. Even though the powers of evil still vex and grieve us, we may know that they fail to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, and that the work of mercy goes on.

"*He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and ordered my goings.*" Ps. xl. 2.

THE Man of Sorrows could use these words as no one else could. Plainly they were meant for Him. Into the depth of mortal agony He sank. He was in the midst of evil, with all its shame and horror. His human nature staggered in its weakness, and with strong crying and tears pleaded for Divine help. The risen Christ was a conqueror by the might of God. He had overcome. Lifted from His humiliation, He stood firmly above the reach of all the powers of death. Nothing could check the triumphant course which God marked for Him as the Author of Eternal Salvation.

We sing a new song with ever new and heartfelt praise for this on which all our hope rests. What Christ bore and won was for us. His movements and works in His Church now are to give us the fruit of His work. We may well thank God, if that work is not in vain for us. Into what a deep of sin and unbelief had man sunk! There we must have lain with no hope, had not Christ gone down to raise us. Earthly things clung to us and clogged us and held us fast. How feebly could we even try to rise freely and steadily towards better things! Happy are we if, though our feet tremble, they rest on what is firm; if we can feel that our path, however trying to faith and hope, is yet marked out for us by One who will lead us step by step to the end! It may be that the rock is hard and rough; but it is rock, and is strong under us. It may be that our goings are not in quiet pleasant places where we need not watch lest we fall or slip. We are not yet at home; but the way leads homeward, and we surely draw nearer home while we trust God for will and power to go on in His ways.

So may our life be one song of thanksgiving, one act of praise. Others may be led to fear and trust our God when they see how we rest upon Christ as our Rock, and obey the guiding of the Divine will in lowly and sure faith. Our hearts, even while trial lasts, will show the glad acknowledgment of mercy which prepares for yet larger blessings, and that holy desire which is the truest thanksgiving. New signs of God's care and new powers of feeling it will call for ever new songs.

"*In Thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness.*"—Ps. xlv. 4.

WE rejoice in our King. It is our cause which He maintains. His glory makes us great. He is the Truth. By Him the mind of the hidden God speaks. He is the meek and lowly One, who has left us a perfect pattern of obedience to God's will. Now He takes the part of those who are in the world as He was. He is the champion of that truth and meekness and righteousness, for the sake of which He suffered, and they suffer still.

No strength of unbelief or falsehood can turn aside the sword by which He makes His spiritual power felt. No heart that hardens itself in defiance can escape the swift messengers of His judgment. His truth is the cheer of His own, whom He gently trains in righteousness, giving ever more light to their faith, and imparting more fully of His grace. It is His love that triumphs. His wrath but clears the way by driving back those who will not have His love, that those who welcome it may feel all its power to save. As in the world, so in each heart where He is asked to reign. If we are one with Him in His warfare, we shall share His glory. He will strike down each error in our faith till the pure truth is ours. He will lead us on, so that with quiet patience we may possess our souls. He will prosper in His work of our salvation, till all that is wanting is supplied and all that is wrong in us is set right.

How full of cheer is the thought to those who heartily are on the King's side! If we long and pray in union with what He does, then we have already ground for praise and thanksgiving. The trial of the meek is sore; their patient abiding is long and hard, while falsehood and unrighteousness flourish. But faith makes us sure that ere long all that is false, and that rises against the King in the pride of unrighteousness, shall flee before Him. His throne is for ever in its firmness and in its glory. The meek-spirited shall possess the new heaven and the new earth; those who have hungered and thirsted after righteousness shall be filled. What glory to call the King our King, and to have any part in that fight for truth and righteousness by which He goes forward to His triumph!

"*I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight.*"—Ps. li. 3, 4.

WE may sin, not knowing or caring what we do: God sees and tries us always. We may hide from ourselves the evil of our lives: we cannot blind God, or hide from Him. We may forget: but the mark which our sin has left upon us is plain to God. He is wronged when we harm those against whom His law warns us to work no ill. He is wounded when we resist that love with which He seeks to bless us, leading us in the strength of it to bless others. If we make light of sin or excuse it, we treat God's warnings as unreal, and question the justice of His judgment.

If we judge and condemn ourselves, we own that God's words are true and that His throne is a throne of right. We are displeased with ourselves that we may please God. We condemn ourselves to the sorrow and shame of penitence, that God may not lay on us the doom of the shameless. We acknowledge the ways in which our sin has shown itself in deed and word and thought. It is before us as a loathsome thing, not in such a way as might renew the stain upon thought and life, but so as to keep us watchful against all occasion of fresh sin. It is before us as a charge made against us before God's throne. It is before us as a foe to be fought with, till there is no more parley with it in our nature, and its power to harm us is destroyed.

And we lay it before God, that He may hear from us what He knows well. To confess it is to stand off from sin, parting ourselves from it, to look at it as what God sees, and as God sees it. This is to begin to forsake it. It is to put ourselves into the holy hands of our God, that He may save us from its power and heal us of the wounds it has left upon us. It is to bow before God, ready to take meekly what reproof and chastening He may see good, waiting for what rule of self-denial and patient toil God may please to give. It is to put ourselves in the way of grace, and to go towards freedom. In the midst of our shame and sorrow we hail the work of God's love. The Spirit that convinces us of sin has begun the good work. The love of God is the love of the Holy One who wills to make us worthy to be called His children.

"I will cry unto God most high; unto God that performeth all things for me."—Ps. lvii. 2.

CHRIST in all things was finishing the work that His Father gave Him to do. The will of the Most High God was being done in the daily life and daily trials of the Saviour. He knew of the legions of strong angels who bore Him strength and comfort, and were ready to spread, like wings of shelter, between Him and harm. His manhood always lived in felt and active dependence upon God. He knew that His Father heard Him, and He prayed.

We are as He was in the world. God cares for the members of Christ, and guards the work He does in them and by their means. No power is above the Most High. No power can come between us and the strong broad covering of His protection. What He tells us to do, He has planned, He wishes done, and uses us to do. Whatever we do well is His own doing. He has chosen us for the work He works by us, leading our wills and putting into us His own strength. The grace which has begun will come in new forms, as God knows needful, till the plan of Divine love is fulfilled. Nothing is out of His knowledge, beyond His power, unheeded by His watchful love. He bids us hold fast to Him in the ways of faith and obedience and prayer, and so leave all with God.

He is the Most High, and we at times feel bowed very low. But He bends over us and His love reaches to where we are. We can stretch up and grasp its whole power to bless and save. Faith meets and receives grace; and the voice of faith is prayer. As grace is ever being given, so believing prayer should never cease. Even when no words are spoken, even when the thoughts are busy with the world's toil, the whole life may be lived in union with Him who waited on His Father always. We may do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and so as to bring glory to God. We may so have our natures fastened to the sources of grace, that the flow may never cease, and the signs of its power may be shown in our whole life. We need the mercy that still trusts us with grace that we have so failed to use aright. We need the mercy that shields us from our strong foes, that helps our feebleness, that blesses us in what we do so poorly, and rewards for what is done by the grace that God's mercy gives.

"Because Thy loving-kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise Thee."—Ps. lxiii. 3.

DAVID in his exile lived indeed, but ever as if at the point to die, and with almost no joy that the world bestows, to make life worth having. His whole being was brought low. But there was that in him which could rise towards and reach after God; and there came to his soul in its want the power of the love of God. God was with him; faith knew of His Presence, and could grasp the help of His goodness. So there was a holy place of meeting with the Most High. What though life were bare of what the world prizes! What though life itself were hardly kept from hour to hour! God's loving-kindness was that which the soul longed for and found. No grief or fear of death could still the voice of praise.

Life is a good gift and an honourable trust. We do right to value it while it lasts, and to thank God, from whom it comes. But when our hold on life is weak and its joys are gone, the heart may still be glad, the lips may still sing of thanksgiving and hope. God's loving-kindness blesses us in ways which reveal Him as a God to be ours for ever. The desire for Him assures us that He, the eternal One, longs for us. We can know that He does draw near to us even now. We can know that when our tried life here is past, we shall go on living in the power of the life that comes from union with Him through Christ.

So it need not dismay us, though we wander through the world as strangers, with few joys to cheer us and with death at hand, if we only have a true thirst for God. For that want there is always supply. God's loving-kindness flows from Him whose being is love, and whose joy is to manifest Himself as the infinite good of those whom He has made. We have a life which is hid with Christ in God. And though we may be "always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake," we can live, with Christ living in us, drawing up our desires towards God, and giving us hearts to praise Him. The grace that enables us to praise God in sorrow, tells us to look forward to more joyful praise when the trial has gone by. If we have indeed eternal life through living union with God, then how full is our meaning when we say, "Thus will I bless Thee while I live!"

"*Why leap ye, ye high hills? this is the hill which God desireth to dwell in.*"—Ps. lxviii. 16.

THERE is no power but of God. As He built the hills, so does He raise up the powers of the world to rule for Him. God chose Zion, that there He might place His Name and meet His people. So He now loves to dwell in His Church. The kingdoms, which have being and might only at His will, ought not to lift up themselves against her in envy and hate. When they seek to harm her by schemes of cunning or by open violence, they plot against the Most High, they dare Him who showed His power at Sinai.

Beside the great mountains Zion looked small. Its glory was in the use for which God chose it. There the Maker of all things had His earthly throne. There He ruled who is the source of all right to rule. There He bade men come to do Him homage and receive His gifts. There seems nothing in the outer look of the Church to tell of her place and rights. The powers of the world mock the claim which God makes for her. They plot against her in jealous fear. God is in her, as He is not in them. His presence is her glory, and is meant to be for their good. When she is honoured it is for His sake. When she is sought it is to find God. That which makes her God's choice is not her own but His. He created her, and He hallows her with His holiness.

Where God loves to dwell He will make all worthy to be His abode. The kingdoms of this world pass away; for their work is only for time. The Church shall stand; for God has given her an everlasting mission. No power on earth is left free from God's control. He rules them as He wills for His wise, holy ends. His spiritual hosts wait to go forth at His word with might that none can withstand. We rejoice that the God of grace dwells among us where we can meet Him, and know of His presence by signs that He gives. Where God has His abode, we can find a home of rest for our souls. Where God dwells, we must take care that we do indeed abide. More are they that are with us than they that are against our God. The Hill of God stands firm for ever. Dwelling where God is on earth, we shall be hereafter where faith takes the form of sure trust, where hope finds ever new satisfaction, and where the full enjoyment of God's presence perfects love.

"*He shall judge Thy people with righteousness, and Thy poor with judgment. The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness.*"—Ps. lxxii. 2, 3.

SOLOMON prayed for a "wise and understanding heart" to judge God's people. His reign was glorious and, what his name meant, peaceable. He was a type of the true Prince of Peace, of whom it was foretold, "With righteousness shall He judge the poor" (Is. xi. 4). To Christ, as the King's Son, was all judgment given. He set up a kingdom over which He should reign in righteousness, uniting men to one another and to God. When He was born the angels sang of peace. When about to go to receive the kingdom He said, "My peace I give unto you."

He makes known God's love, and He wins men to put away their distrust so as to be reconciled to God. God takes the part of the weak and poor; there is with Him no respect of persons while He sees that right is done. No appeal to His justice is in vain. Not always does He at once give what the world calls peace, keeping far off all that might tempt to fear or call for watchful effort. Often we need to be "exercised" by the discipline which "yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness" (Heb. xii. 11). "The work of righteousness shall be peace" (Is. xxxii. 17). Where Christ reigns in us, breaking up the power of sin and guiding us to will and do by the inspiration and help of His Spirit, there is peace.

We would not have the peace which is no peace, when poor of grace and needy of all that makes man great, the dull nature is quiet in ignorance and sin. We will have no peace with God's foes around us or with our own unfaithfulness. We choose war, that we may reach that state of peace and harmony in our whole being which God gives as the fruit of righteousness. We know that we are poor and needy. We are poor in spirit, ready to be as Christ was in this world if His will be so. Only we ask Him to make us blessed by making sure our part in the kingdom of heaven. We ask for the peace of those whom He assures of the favour of God, and strengthens with the grace of God, and so fills with the fruits of the righteousness of God that at last they are found of Him in peace, without spot and blameless.

"*Vow, and pay unto the Lord your God: let all that be round about Him bring presents unto Him that ought to be feared.*"—Ps. lxxvi. 11.

WE gather round our God that, as His children, we may learn how to honour Him, and may be safe under His strong care. We draw close, because He is to be feared. God has full right over all we are and have; but He treats us as free, and in His mercy rewards us. We owe Him all duty, whether we vow or not. We vow, that we may set our duty plainly before us, may own it and seek grace to do it. We declare our will when we vow; we carry our will into act when we pay. If the heart be true when we vow, God meets our ready will with blessing. To vow aright makes our doing of duty more full and regular. The devotion with which we vow must live on while we pay, lest a heartless doing be no true fulfilment of our vow.

Love will delight to give to God much that no law claims. What we vow we must pay with glad readiness. We dare not take or wish back part of what we have set aside for God. Ananias vowed in word more than his heart let him give. He wished to seem to men a larger giver than he was. He forgot that God was to be feared. How much we have vowed to our Creator, our Redeemer, and our Sanctifier! How much have we asked God's grace to enable us to fulfil! What large promises have our humbled hearts made, from time to time! God, who ought to be feared, remembers them all.

God gave the grace to vow. How far have we used the grace to pay, which was also given then? God asks us to be cheerful givers, that His blessing may stir us to a higher feeling of what we owe, and make us more glad in paying. Christ gave Himself, fulfilling in due time the promise made long before to man. In that gift man received all that Divine love could bestow. We are pleaded with to give ourselves as a living sacrifice. We owe to God no less. We have vowed it all in each true prayer which sought grace to please God. It is hard to give a little. It is easy to carry out in its parts the devotion of ourselves honestly made. If God has our heart and keeps it His own, we shall not ask what we may withhold, but in what new and more perfect way we can perform our vows.

"*Return, we beseech Thee, O God of hosts: look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine.*"—Ps. lxxx. 14.

THE Psalmist, as he looked on Israel in humiliation, saw in her the chosen vine of God. Walled round by the Divine strength, gifted with all grace from heaven, she had flourished and spread abroad the shadow of her influence. Why was all blighted and trampled down? The vine was brought from Egypt, and planted in a cleared place, and blessed with manifold privileges, that it might bear fruit of obedience and devotion. He who looked for grapes found but the wild grapes of sloth and wilfulness and sin.

When God's Church now is laid low and withered and barren, and seems given over for a prey, all this but tells of unfaithfulness to her high and glorious calling. Brought out from the Egypt of sin, God made her His own care. Her mission was to displace what is evil and unfruitful and to make the earth rich with what God might gather for His glory. When she fails in this, the power to fulfil it is withdrawn; she is ready to be dried up from the roots as a barren cumberer of the ground. Outward and worldly prosperity is no assurance of God's favour. Nor do sore trial and loss in outward things prove that God rejects her. The vine thrives best when exposed to heat and wind on high and rocky soil, and when the knife is not spared. The spiritual Israel suffers spiritual desolation for spiritual failure. The answer to the cry of those who plead with her God often seems like judgment. When the fruit of repentance begins to show itself, the Divine Husbandman purgeth His vine that it may bring forth more fruit. He prunes that He may not have to take away.

We plead with God for that which He has planted, not as if His love had ceased, but sure that He changes not. We ask Him to look down with the recalling, warning, restoring power of the look which won S. Peter from his denial. And we ask God to visit, leaving it to His wisdom in what way He will draw near. The wounds that God gives bring health. As with the Church, so is it with each of us who is cared for by Him who gave us part in the life of the vine. We must know the times of our visitation, and gladly yield to what God sees needful for the growth and ripening of good fruit.

"*The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.*"—Ps. lxxxvii. 2.

THE Church is built by God. She rests firmly on the strong hills which the Almighty has raised high above the world around. She is the city set upon an hill; and all eyes turn to her. She is holy in her influence abroad, in the truths she teaches, in the blessings from God stored in her for the use of men. God loves her as His own work, and His love is ever bestowing new grace, which makes her more to be loved. He loves all the tents of Jacob wherein He can find His own people. But in Zion His Name dwells as it does not elsewhere; His grace works with special power. Thither the tribes go up to meet their Lord, and to find those Divine gifts which enrich their lives.

God loves Zion because she is His chosen means for bringing home to men His truth and grace. It is not as men, apart from one another, that God's love reaches us and blesses us most fully. He does indeed shed light and pour out good wherever souls will welcome Him; but He delights to bless us in such ways that our being blessed is a means of blessing, and His grace spreads as the common heritage of all.

At the gates of cities the wise met for counsel, the mighty gathered their strength for war. By the gates those entered who desired to share the shelter and the privileges of the city; and by the gates passed out those who made her influence felt abroad. God loves to see the Church studying and guarding and teaching His truth, making known the wisdom which she learns from above. He loves to see her sending forth her champions clothed and equipped with the armour of God, vowed to overthrow error and to win the nations to Him. He loves to see her spiritual wealth and wisdom making all around her rich and enlightened.

We rejoice and praise God for His love for His Church, and for our part in all the good things of which that love assures. For we need not lose heart, though we feel as if we could not dare to hope that God loves us. Our unworthiness does not put us out of the reach of that far-reaching love, so long as it is mourned and fought against. God has chosen His Church, and has called us to a share in the love which founded her upon His everlasting truth and holiness.

"*He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.*"—Ps. xci. 1.

THE Most High is over all, seeing and noting and ruling all. He can make His power felt in blessing or in punishment. Men's thoughts and feelings about Him make no change in what He is; only in what He is to them. It is by faith that we find what the careless, unbelieving world knows not of. In the life of faith we are safe under His care. His word is pledged to those who take Him at His word. His grace is sure to those who ask it, and who receive it not in vain.

We can lift up our hearts to the Most High, and know that the Almighty comes between us and harm. If we draw nigh to God faithfully, He will draw nigh to us as a faithful God. If we yield to His guiding, ruling hand, His hand shall be always over us for protection and blessing. Our way is full of peril; in each step of life we need the Divine help. The dangers that may happen to the body are many. Faithful obedience to God's laws has much to do with keeping us from harm. And what the world thinks loss or ruin may be made to bring us good by Him who cares for our eternity. We are safe if His unseen presence overshadow us.

But our true danger is from those who lay their cunning snares to make us the captive prey of sin. We dread that plague the end of which is spiritual death. What happens to the body may but drive us closer to our shelter in God, or place us securely out of reach of this life's trials. But what hurts the soul weakens its union with God, its one hope here, and its everlasting portion. We flee unto God to hide us till the danger is past. He spreads over us the protection of His own presence, so that the snare is thrown in vain. He gives the power of strong life from Himself, which enables us to move unharmed even where the deadly poison of sin is all around. Only let us watch and pray, lest we wander from His care and go forth unaided to meet the powers of evil. We may be tempted by the false promises of sin. We may lose patience in well-doing. We may trust in ourselves, as if we had wrought alone what God has wrought in us. We are safe so long as we remain where God shelters us, till He brings us where all are safe for ever.

"*Give unto the Lord the honour due unto His Name: bring an offering, and come into His courts.*"—Ps. xcvi. 8.

GOD'S glory is infinite and eternal. We cannot add to it, or take from it. We may forget or blaspheme Him; but we make no change in Him: we but lose our place of high dignity among those whom He calls to proclaim His glory. We cannot find out to perfection that which God veils; but we can by searching find out what will win our faith and love and guide our lives. Our duty is to learn and meditate upon what is revealed.

God makes all His goodness to pass before us. He is a presence everywhere. We trace His power and wisdom in His works. All things that He has made show forth His praise in their beauty and order. The rule of His providence proclaims His majesty, as with a sure quiet hand He guides all things to fulfil His ends. In Christ and His work God is revealed with most plainness; He comes nearest to us, showing the glory of His love. As we learn to know God in Christ, so through Christ we can declare His glory.

God will accept the best that we have. He will bless us for the loving will which He is ready to give. He is a Father; and He welcomes what His children give Him, not for its worth, but for the love of which it is the sign. He is pleased when with voice and manner we show reverence and holy fear, devotion and gratitude. He is pleased when we lay before Him each power we have, and own His right over them all, and ask Him to use us for His glory. He is pleased when we sacrifice our own wishes to His will, and yield His claim for hard work or long patience. He is pleased when our desires outrun what in our weakness we can do, and we long to do more, and to do it better.

In His sanctuary, which He makes holy as the special place of meeting with His people, we find a welcome when we present ourselves, our souls and bodies, all we have and all we are, in union with the one offering of Jesus Christ. He is our hope always, in all we do before God, in all our life of duty and worship. We come into the courts of God to renew our union with Christ, and to plead in His appointed way that finished work which reveals the glory of God's love and opens the way to heaven.

"*Who saveth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies.*"—Ps. ciii. 4.

DAVID knew how often there was but a step between him and death. He knew how, again and again, God's hand saved him. He was sure of the same care in those things which had to do with a higher world and a life which lasts for ever. We bless God when we call to mind the dangers of each hour, and the ways in which God keeps us in life and guards us from harm. We cannot count the gifts which brighten life, which tell of God's thoughtful care in lesser and in greater things.

How can we know the worth of that life which is His own life, which in us is the hope of life for ever! How can we tell at what cost He has made it ours, and has cared for its safety! Spiritual foes beset us; we move in the midst of snares. There is a deadly power ever at work to destroy our hold on God who is our life. But the Redeemer's work goes on. Where we are threatened grace waits; the Saviour is mighty to save to the uttermost, enabling us to persevere till our life is out of reach of hurt or foe. And the Divine goodness does more than save from death and shame. It crowns with glory which does not fade, and which shows forth the inward strength of holiness. It does more than free from the bondage of foes. It gives a royal power to reign over our nature and to make all things serve us. Even when we have failed or our strength has been wasted, renewing grace revives the weakened life, and the sense of lost power brings us humbly for gifts which enable us to rise heavenward like the eagle with fresh vigour.

What high honour to be met not with a cold mercy which leaves us still far from God? The mercies make known the tender care of One who would by His goodness lead us to repentance, faith, and love. There is a glory in being thus of worth as the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty, even though we are still far off from the full blessedness which God means for us. We must guard well the life which Christ died and lives to save. We must see that we turn to best use the loving-kindness which helps us with manifold tender mercies, giving us that righteousness which will at last appear as a crown of everlasting glory.

"*Until the time that His word came: the word of the Lord tried him.*"—Ps. cv. 19.

JOSEPH heard in his dreams what he believed to be the word of the Lord. He told his dreams, and his words made his brethren hate him. He was sold into Egypt because of his word; and the word of the Lord who had spoken to him upheld him in his affliction. There was sore trial to his faith, while he felt the galling of his bondage. The word of the Lord tried him, as he thought of the great hope it set before him, and of the state in which God left him.

But the word of the Lord, while it tried him, was his strength. He did not forsake the Lord, but was true to His word, which warned against sin. The time came when his words to his fellow-prisoners were fulfilled, and his words about his own future began to be accomplished. He had been sent by God to save life, and his brethren, when they bowed down before him, would call to mind his words spoken long before. So with Him who suffered to save the lives of those who gave Him up to die. While He was doing God's will, His human nature felt the trial hard and long till all was finished. The words which He spoke of His coming glory made men seek to slay Him. When upon the cross He felt forsaken, He looked upward still, and waited for the fulfilment of the Lord's word.

So also is it with Christ's Church now, and with her faithful members. God has spoken, and our words are bold; for they do not utter our own thoughts, but God's will made known in what God has said. The world will not brook this, and would make God's word vain by persecution and bonds. The Church is mocked, and all her words set aside as if proved to be only those of a dreamer. But God brings low, that He may exalt; He lets the world seem to have its way, that it may in the end make the truth of His word more plain. We do not lose heart, though we are tied to tasks that seem vain, and though the fetters lie painfully upon our souls. We do not yield, however tempted to sin against the Lord by disobeying His word, and so showing lack of faith in His promise. We pray that we may bear the testing. We have heard the word of the Lord. We cannot be as those to whom it has not come, or who have not proclaimed it.

"*He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still.*"—Ps. cvii. 29.

THE Church is like the ark in which God saved His chosen. Men find in her a refuge from the floods of evil. Her course is marked, and the lights of heaven shine to guide; but storms beat against her, and she seems at times ready to sink. Those whose hearts keep true are "at their wits' end:" they can only cry to the Lord; and they are tempted to doubt, like those who said "Carest Thou not that we perish?"

Though Christ gives no sign that He watches, it is enough that He is present in His Church. He does not forget, though He be forgotten. No harm can come, while faith looks to Him, and the true aim is to do His will and be guided by His Word. Those with whom He is must turn to Him, as soon as dark and stormy times come, and not wait for despair to drive them to Him. Faith should keep men calmly working on, not send them to seek calmness when their own unaided anxious work has failed. And so, when Christ "has not come," or at least shown Himself, while His toiling disciples seem to make no way against all that is contrary, they must toil on, for He has bidden them. The first sign of His nearness may alarm, so strange and unlooked-for may it be. But when the doubt which hinders from the frank welcome of Him is stilled, and He is "received" as the Master whom all obey, the storm ceases; the end is brought near which, till His presence and rule were realised, had seemed to be sought in vain.

With our own souls it is the same. We have our course to steer, in spite of the tides of custom, and the blasts of vain doctrine, and the shifting storms of trial. And there are rocks and shoals which need a careful pilot and a watchful eye. As with S. Paul's ship, there shall be no loss of any soul that is in God's care. Christ is a Saviour during life's storms, as well as from them at last. He can calm the troubles of the spirit, and still the inward risings of sin, and quiet every restless soul with the word that tells of His nearness. He can bid the very tempest bear us on faster. He can make a great calm around us even now. If we persevere, He will at last bring us to the haven where we would be, in the quiet of God's shelter for evermore.

"*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do His commandments: His praise endureth for ever.*"—Ps. cxi. 10.

NO man is wise who in his search for truth forgets God, by whom all things were made and are upheld. He is a fool who in his rule of life ignores the one Supreme Ruler, to whom every man must give account. He has not taken the first step in wisdom's ways, who has not begun to think with awe of the eye that ever sees him, and the hand that ever holds him. This is but to take into account the greatest and most solemn of all facts. God is the authority as to what is right, and is the Source of all good. We prove our wisdom by doing what reason teaches us is our duty.

The fear which made the unprofitable servant hide his talent in the napkin was foolishness. Wise fear will not only warn us to depart from evil, but will make us careful to ask what God would have us do. Fear may at first have torment in it, and almost cast out love; but even when it does not draw to God, it drives to Him, not from Him. There is no place to hide from Him; it is vain to flee. A wise fear leads to Him for that light and grace that make fit for His presence. As wisdom grows, fear is changed and purified; there is less thought of self in it, and more of God. As the soul looks upward, the wisdom that cometh from above gives it truer, nobler thoughts of God. We do not fear Him less, but more, though in another way. Our fear becomes a reverent delight in God's holiness, a loving care to be worthy of Him. Our fear is almost another form of love; and the ways of wisdom in which it guides us become more and more ways of pleasantness and peace.

The chief part of all our wisdom is to use each power and gift in obedience to God's will and in dependence on His help and blessing. So are we wise unto salvation. All things work together for the one great end always kept in view. In the sight of men our lives may be folly, and may seem in vain. But we seek the things that are for ever, and the praise of God. We live in hope of the glory to be revealed, when Christ appears, and the wise are ready to go in with Him where perfect love casteth out all fear that cannot live in heaven and help its everlasting joy.

"*The Lord is on my side; I will not fear what man can do unto me.*"—Ps. cxviii. 6.

EXPERIENCE worketh hope. Those who have trusted God and proved Him true, know what He always is. His chosen people may well praise Him who gives them their high place of trust. Those whose work it is to plead for men, and to bring God's means of grace to wanting souls, are ever reminded of the flow of goodness with which the Church is blessed. Men outside the Church, who fear the Lord whom they hardly know, are moved to praise and thank the Source of all the good which they enjoy. God's love rests upon all who do not by wilful unbelief and rebellion put it from them. It is for ever, because God is. Its work lasts in the eternal good of those whom it saves. God is on our side; He takes our part against our lower self, and seeks to save us when we forsake Him. If we put our lives under His rule, He takes us under His special care. If we are watchful in well-doing, He will guard our welfare.

We know that God is on our side; for He has loved us, not in word only but in deed. He has sent His Son; He has made atonement for our sins; He has delivered us from the bondage of sin, and given us the freedom of children. We are not shut in by the evil ways of the world, or by our own weakness, or by the strength of the evil one. Faith opens out a world of noble sanctifying duty, of great hopes and of eternal good. We have found proof of the goodness and mercy that always wait to spare, and help, and bless. What has seemed sure to harm us has only helped to make more plain the works of God in our behalf.

Shame on us, if we are not firm in taking God's side. Shame on us, if we fail in faith in Him who makes our cause His own, and whose love aims to find its glory in our good. Man may be allowed to try us and to bring us much sorrow; the world may cast us out; the evil one may lay us as low as Job was laid. But all the while, if we have faith to look to Him who stands by us that He may keep us faithful, all is harmless. Nay, all is used by Him to work for us more and better good. Man can take from us, at worst, only what is ours but for a while. We may shrink from the trial, but we need not be dismayed.

"*Remember Thy word unto Thy servant, upon which Thou hast caused me to hope. This is my comfort in my affliction: for Thy word hath quickened me.*"—Ps. cxix. 49, 50.

GOD never forgets. He always keeps His word. The love on which He tells us to count does not fail or weaken. He is kind to the unthankful and unholy; all things living share His bounties. But the Psalmist here speaks of gifts which are only for those who are prepared to use them. We draw near to God as those who find in His service liberty and joy. Delivered from the bondage of corruption, we glory that we are free to serve the Holy One.

God's promises encourage us to pray, and, at the same time, they warn us to take care how far we are of those to whom the promises belong. Are we servants in deed as well as name? Do we mean to use the gifts we ask for in the spirit which becomes those who own Him as their Lord? If so, then our hope may be sure indeed. God's promises are as firm as His laws. They both equally make known His will. If we desire to do His commandments and to gain His gifts, He is teaching us to will what His love wills for us. The word of promise from the everliving God gives life and blessing, even while we seem to perish, waiting for its fulfilment. The hope of what He promises is already a real possession.

When we pray, we ask God to show what He has told us He is, by doing what He has taught us to hope for. When we come to Him in His means of grace, we take His word for the worth of those ways by which He has told us to seek His special gifts. When we are baptized, we seek, as He has taught us, the new birth of the spirit, that we may "put on Christ," and share in the saving grace from Him by which His members are enabled to work out their salvation. In the Holy Communion we show the Lord's death; we make a remembrance before God of that on which all our hope rests. We ask for all good while we kneel to receive; Him in whom is the fulfilment of all our hope. When we put forth strength which we have already from Him, we ask for a blessing on our labour and our patience. Our whole life, if it be a life of faith, shows continually our hope in the living God, and shows our steady trust that our hope is not in vain.

"Thy testimonies are wonderful: therefore doth my soul keep them."—Ps. cxix. 129.

THE testimonies of God make known His truth and His will, our faith and our duty. God is far above us, and His thoughts are not as ours. We cannot tell God's reasons for doing what He does in the way He does, or the far-off ends which He has in view. His words are full of mystery. They must be so; for they speak of heavenly things in the language of earth. Were all quite plain, there would be nothing for faith to do; we should be less ready to believe that the voice is God's. We can know what each mystery is, and can state it, though we are unable to explain it. We ponder it reverently in our hearts, and as we learn more of its meaning we learn more of what there is to believe.

We are amazed as we study the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God. We adore as we find out new depths in the testimony of Nature and of Revelation. God has spoken to us by His Son, at once with great clearness and great mystery. His life and work are the great testimony which we have from God. God brings us close to Him, and yet veils Himself, so that love and reverence help one another. The high example of Christ gives God's law new meaning and new force. How pure and high is that holiness which is held up as our standard! How far beyond what man could have thought out for himself!

The laws of God are plainly the laws of our Maker, who knows what His creatures are and understands their needs. They are also the laws of our Redeemer and Sanctifier, who would lead and form us in His own perfect way towards perfect good. What great hope do they give us, as we learn their deep meaning and feel the power with which they claim to rule the very thoughts and intents of the heart! Wonderful indeed they are, and because they are so plainly Divine we yield ourselves to their influence and control. We look, through and past the testimonies, to God in whose power and care we are. Our lives fall short, even our wills are unsteady; but we own the one God as our soul's Lord. We rejoice in those testimonies which tell of God's glory, and in keeping of which we find our glory and our great reward.

"*Unto Thee lift I up mine eyes, O Thou that dwellest in the heavens.*"—PS. cxxiii. 1.

THE world is not the Church's Lord. She is not a captive slave, forced to bear helplessly the world's ill usage, and do its will. Those who know her state and love her do not look to her foes to spare her: they do not watch for the signs of the world's will that she may guide her course so as to please men. Her Lord dwells in heaven; He looks down upon all that goes on; He holds in His hand the fortunes of the Church. He rules and blesses her; He lifts His hand to keep back her foes; and no plot, however strong, can stay or check His will. So when the world would crush the power which it fears as well as hates, when it would silence her witness and mar or check her work, the faithful look upwards in hope and quiet patience. They pray that God may keep her true. They wait for His help.

The Church's cause is ours. We do not love God, if we fail in zeal for her through whom His Spirit works. The good we receive is our share in the common blessing which is hers. All that has to do with her well-being must be a care to us. Our eyes are apt to look down. Like S. Peter on the waters, we look away from our Saviour to the waves and the winds: we think of them more than of Him. We often search for a way of help through our own skill and strength; and not till these prove vain, turn to Him, whose voice can bid our hearts be still, even though the storm last on. We seek the wisdom of the world, rather than that which cometh from above. So we need ever to remind ourselves of our one sure help, and to see that the direction of our trust is right.

Above the strife of tongues that distract, out of reach of all that would shake His throne of justice, seeing all the meaning and end of what to us who are in the midst of it seems aimless confusion, holding all that boasts against Him in His firm grasp, reigns our Lord. With the earnest gaze of faith let us make more real to our souls that He is present, the holy and the true. Let us look to Him, that we may grow in love and hope, and learn to wait in patience. So shall all be well. His eyes shall be over us for good, and we shall be trained and gifted to work for the same high end which is the aim of His love and wisdom.

"*For there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.*"—Ps. cxxxiii. 3.

GOD gave Israel all that made them great. To the place of His presence they all looked. There God met His people, and in the worship which He commanded they found blessing. As the costly ointment, poured on the high priest's head went down to the skirts of his garments, so was the blessing which God gave shared by the lowliest of the people. As the dews which rose from the valleys round Hermon were borne by the breezes to fertilise the parched hills far and wide, so was the Divine blessing which each received spread abroad for the good of all. This was God's plan, that His people, loving Him and loving one another, should find the blessing of life for evermore.

Israel after the flesh has failed; and now to the Christian brotherhood the privilege and the warning come. We are joined in closer bonds; for we are members of Christ and of one another, brethren in the family of God. By the life of Christ we all live. We can love God; for He has loved us and shown us His love in the work of Christ, and has given us power to love Him by sending us the Holy Spirit. That love to God takes the form of love to one another. We show our love to God, whom we have not seen, by caring for the brethren whom we see. We have need of one another. The grace given to each is for the growth and strength and work of the whole body. It is as members of the Body of Christ that we have life, even the life of God.

How good and pleasant it is to receive, that we may spread abroad the blessing of Divine love! How good and joyful to know that the more we give the more we are given from the source that is inexhaustible! We can let our brethren see in us the love and kindness of God whom they have not seen. We can win men to peace and unity, and know that we are being used by God to make the Church stronger for His work and a brighter witness to His truth. We can learn to prize more those means of grace in which we are drawn near to God and to one another. And as we realise the blessing of peace which we inherit, we can know that the spirit of love which God has given is the very life of God within us, and is the promise of life for evermore.

"*Keep me, O Lord, from the hands of the wicked; preserve me from the violent man; who have purposed to overthrow my goings.*"—Ps. cxl. 4.

DAVID knew well the hate and strength of those who sought to slay him. He knew how weak he was to meet them in open war, or to baffle their cunning plots. His soul was worn and tired with watching. And he had more to guard against than bodily harm: he feared lest his faith should fail, and he should be tempted or driven into sin. He shows us how to act in like case. The way of no man is all peace. Most of us are at times vexed and hard pressed. We find out how evil the world is, and how strongly and cunningly the powers of sin work to do us harm. We have to stand up against open foes; we have to be ready for dangers hidden till they are upon us. False friends betray, and those who wish us well harm us through mistaken kindness.

It is hard to keep upright, and to go on, with brave true heart, in the narrow and right way. For even in the path of duty traps are laid; even in the close following of Christ we may find what is likely to make us fall. Those who in self-trust and wilfulness mix the truth of God with their own thoughts, or err from the plain rule of God's law, often do more deadly harm than those who deny God altogether. We need, above all, to guard against ourselves. The evil one stirs up all that is weak and wayward and sinful in our nature; and tries to overthrow us, even through what is best and truest.

As with David, our one hope is in God. We cannot deliver ourselves: if we are to be safe, we must be delivered. But it is for us to seek and come to the Saviour, casting ourselves upon His care. Christ passed through harder trials than David knew; and He who remembers the days of His flesh can be touched with a feeling of our cares. In Him and through Him we look up to God. He will keep us from all that evil which, in many forms, works in man under the influence of our great enemy. We are right to pray that, if it be God's will, we may be kept in the hands of God, so as not to fall into the power of men. We are bound to pray that assaults from without, or the rising up of evil in us, may drive us closer to Him; that He may cast out any lurking unfaithfulness which might leave us open to the enemy of souls.

"The Lord is good to all: and His tender mercies are over all His works."—Ps. cxlv. 9.

GOD is love; and it is the nature of love to show itself in goodness. God cannot but be kind. It is His joy to make His creatures know His love, and be drawn to Him for greater gifts. He has prepared the world for the use and comfort of beings who can feel and think. True, there is a shadow over all things. Nothing earthly is for ever, and the coming of death saddens and pains and awes. But there is far more pleasure than pain among the countless beings that live bright lives, and die a quick death to which they have not looked forward. The more we search, the more we find to amaze us in the manifold provision made for the manifold wants of God's creation. We only know a part, and we can trace God's workings only a little way.

Who can count the signs of goodness in God's care for man! What rich supplies of all that helps and cheers life are stored up for him! What interests lie all around for his mind to study and delight in! Sin has indeed spoiled the world for man, and has spoiled man's power of full happiness. But God, with those things which tell of man's sin, has given tokens of the Divine mercy and help. Means of healing are ready for the sick, and consolations for those whose hearts are wounded. Above all, light and grace are brought within man's reach. We know there is a meaning in the blessings and the woes which mingle strangely in our lives. We can know of a Father who cares for, and who chastens. We can see in the sorrows of Christ a warning of what sin does, and a pledge of what God means for us in His tender mercy. We learn in our own trials to trust the love of Him who seeks to bring us to the highest good in the best way.

Most of what darkens the world is in spite of God, and is man's own work. God shows His goodness in teaching us how to live so as to enjoy what is prepared for us. And as we are joined with one another to add to one another's happiness, so we cannot suffer alone; that which our sin brings on us spreads around. But God's mercy is plain in thus making a passing evil mark the danger of evil that is for ever. When we are roused to put away from us the sin which bears God's wrath, the Divine love waits to bless.

"*The Lord loveth the righteous.*"—Ps. cxlvi. 8.

HE who is loving unto all does not love all in the same way. There is the love of pity and of sad longing. There is the love of delight. God loved the world when He sent His Son to save it from its sin; and He loves the world of beings who on high serve Him in holiness. Christ loved the publicans and sinners, the simple people, the proud Pharisee, the disciples, and some of these last more than others. The Divine love is manifold. The unthankful and unholy, who do not care for His mercy or put His grace to use, are still helped by God's love. Its full blessings belong to those who love God. They have learned to know and trust Him who has first loved them. They seek the holy ends which God seeks for them. They try to reach these ends in the ways which God wills.

So God loves to look on them; and as He looks on them and sees their true earnestness He loves them more. He gives them larger grace, and a higher calling, as His love bestows fitness. God loves to see in them the working of His grace, and to watch them grow, according to His plan, more like Him day by day. As Christ increased in favour with God so do those who follow Him. Christ was the beloved Son, in whom the Father was well pleased. Those who are led by the Spirit of God are God's children indeed. He delights to see the character of Christ being formed in those in whom Christ lives.

God's love cannot but be active and take the form of grace. He loves those who have become righteous, and those in whom He finds a ready will to be made righteous. If we have learned to hunger and thirst after righteousness, we can rejoice in the Lord who loves us. While we live before Him in faith, we are ever drawing from Him fresh gifts of blessing, and He is ever caring for us in new ways. He is surely doing for us what has the assurance of all good; making us what He would have us be. Nothing can harm, all things must serve those who are the care of the Almighty. His dealings with us may seem not to tell of love; but He has His own careful ways of bringing us to good at last. He bestows the righteousness which we seek as our first end, giving all else as it helps towards that.

"*The Lord will hear me when I call upon Him.*"—Ps. iv. 3.

THE Lord does not mock us when He bids us pray. The prayer of faith with which we wait on Him for His gifts is itself His gift. He hears as One who waits to help and save. For He is the righteous God of our righteousness, who has set our heart and our life free to go in the way of His will. He has chosen us for Himself, making us His children, giving us from Himself the power of godliness, and pledging His word to do unto the end a father's part.

Our prayers and our lives are one. When we pray, we welcome and obey the grace which leads our desires aright. When we yield our members as instruments of righteousness unto holiness, we obey the same grace. We know that God hears the cry of the heart which He draws towards Him. If we are where He has sent or brought us, He is not out of hearing: He does not leave us alone, or forget our least want. If we suffer for well-doing, He who calls us to bear the cross in the way of duty will uphold us safely till our work for Him is done.

Marvellous mystery of Divine love, that among the countless creatures that are His care, we should each be sure of a separate audience, and that our feeble voice should have power with the Almighty! Yet the great marvel is in this, that He has called us in Christ, and given us His Holy Spirit. All the rest follows, of course, from this. God does not lightly leave the work that He has begun. When His goodness formed us, He bade us look to Him for the upholding of our life. When He redeemed us, He gave us promises which He has taught us to plead. The gift of adoption enables us with the spirit of adoption to cry, Abba, Father. It cannot be that any true prayer should rise to Him in vain. It is His will to give what we ask in prayers that are according to His will. If we live in Christ, and ask in His Name, our prayers are as if Christ prayed them. When we call on God, it is in answer to His call on us. We turn to Him with the instinct that He has put within us. We grieve Him when we ask not, or when we ask wilfully for what is not the best. We are often slow to pray. We are at no time so ready to call upon Him as He is to hear.

"*Lord, Thou hast heard the desire of the humble: Thou wilt prepare their heart. Thou wilt cause Thine ear to hear.*" Ps. x. 17.

WHEN we have learned how evil and weak and poor we are, we know a truth that God has taught us. He who has led us so far in the way of wisdom will go on. By one lesson He prepares us for the rest. When we turn towards Him with true and guileless heart, though with however weak and unshaped desires, we know that He has begun to show Himself to our souls and to win our faith. That looking upward and desire which seek to rest on God are His preparation for His work. He is giving us eyes to look for His love, and ears to listen for His promises, and hands to stretch out to receive what He waits to bestow.

When we know not what to pray for as we ought, when words will not come, when thoughts seem poor and the heart feels cold, then it may be that the desires within us are too great for our minds to realise and our lips to express. They are, it may be, God's own inspiration; and we are called to thankful hope instead of sorrow. The Spirit's groanings cannot be uttered by us; but God knows the mind of the Spirit, and His will is surely being done. We are being shown how dependent we are, and are kept from the danger of trusting even in our prayers. So our hearts grow to be fixed in more humble yet firm hold on God. Each sign that God hears us, when we can hardly hear ourselves, is a gift of grace that prepares our hearts to speak more plainly and with more trust into the ear of God. So we are prepared to gain larger, fuller blessing from the grace which the Divine Father ever sends to those whose hearts are won to call upon Him faithfully. The gifts of His love do not come to us in vain; and when they are ours we do not fail to find in them the good which God means for us.

Praise to God, who gives the wish to breathe our wants and cares into His ear! Praise to God, who keeps us humble, and so prepares our heart to seek Him as we ought! Praise to God, who bends over us to catch the feeblest whisper of the true desire, that proves the active presence of His loving Spirit and readiness to profit by what He gives!

"*In Thy presence is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.*"—Ps. xvi. 11.

THERE is much joy within the reach of all. There are pleasures which tell of our Father's kindness. Far be it from us to make little of the least sign of His thoughtful goodness. Rather let us welcome and prize all that our Father sends, and think how great the joys must be to which all here is as nothing.

All the best things of earth are more or less mixed with care; no one is without drawback. Pleasures come to us side by side with that which pains and wearies. We are anxious while we have them, knowing for how short a time they last. And even the purest happiness that Heaven sends must be enjoyed on earth by those to whom evil clings and who are beset by evil. There are spiritual blessings that tend to lift the soul above much of what tempts and pains; but the soul is slow to rise, and easily dragged down again by the weight of earthly things.

All here is but a foretaste and a promise. The joy and peace of the thoughtful and devout are mainly in believing. Much has to be taken on trust and waited for with patient hope. We are not fit, while here, for the training of rest and joy which will carry on God's work in those who see Him as He is. What blessedness to be so changed and purified as to feel no shrinking in the presence of the holy and all-seeing One! What joy to have become so like Christ as to be able to satisfy our utmost desires in a life that is all pleasing to God! No words can tell, no heart can know, what God has in His great love laid up for those who love Him and ever try to draw nearer to Him. Enough that in the very presence of God, the light of the Divine countenance pours forth all the gladness that Divine love can give. No cloud is cast by sin; nothing in those who are blessed makes the blessing fail in its power; there is no night of sorrow or disappointment coming; no pure form of joy is lacking; no joy is felt to be imperfect. As the power of enjoying grows, fresh joys come from the boundless resources of God's love. The right hand of the Almighty keeps safely those who are gathered under His care, and gives them all good for ever.

"*Keep back Thy servant from presumptuous sins.*"—Ps. xix. 13.

EVEN in the truest heart some roots of sin will hide. The most faithful life is not free from flaw. Remembering our ignorance and infirmity, we must ever pray Him who understands all our least errors to cleanse us from our secret faults. But we need not sin wilfully. The word wilful warns us that to sin so is to choose to sin. As we are servants of God, His will should rule us, His word be our law. Wilful sins are as other lords who would draw us away to hold to them and despise God. Those who know not and love not God take their own course, regardless of God. We pray to be held in check, and we leave it to God to keep us by what means He will.

It is human to fall short and err; it is devilish to face God, and to sin boldly under His very eye. Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, when trust is taken from God as a guide and a giver of good. It is to invite the tempter; it is to say to him, "Call me, and I will go with you." The carelessness which often betrays us to our fall may be presumption. There is sin in going in the way of sin, or in leaving the soul without the strength of grace and the armour of God and the knowledge of duty. If sin is known to be sin, if there be no sudden or overpowering rush of temptation, if the will calmly chooses, in spite of the misgivings of conscience, the sin is presumptuous.

Temptation often creeps upon the soul; and from carelessness men pass to daring resistance. A sinful indulgence is found pleasant; new opportunity is watched for. The desire becomes a ruling passion to which all must give way. So, little by little, the whole being is handed over to the rule of evil; sin is owned as the master to be served and lived for; God is set aside, as One neither loved nor feared.

To refuse to obey Christ is to reject Him as the Author of eternal salvation to us; it is to make His death and His risen life in vain for us. Well may we dread the wilful sin which leads on to being thus without God and with no hope! Well may we be glad and thankful that God claims us as His servants and holds fast to us as His children! He is ready to keep us safely by training us in a habit of cheerful obedience, and giving us a faithful, loyal spirit towards our faithful Saviour.

"All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep His covenant and His testimonies."—Ps. xxv. 10.

THE Lord's paths are the manifestations of Himself in His dealings with men. They are often hard to know; for we do not see all that is going on, and the end is far off. Sometimes we own God's justice, when we try in vain to find the workings of mercy. But if we wait in faith it will appear. Did we see better we should see it at once.

The righteous Judge must do right: He cannot treat alike those who keep His word and those who do not. We are sure of God's justice; but while we fear Him, we can have calm trust in His mercy. In mercy He warns of justice, lest we lose His mercy. In mercy Christ came to seek and save. For judgment He will come. There was justice in His first coming; for it was only being true to His own nature that God should be lavish of mercy. There will be proof of mercy in His second coming; for even in judging the wicked, He will but withdraw mercies long misused.

Mercy rejoices over judgment; for the rewards of mercy are far beyond the utmost hope of the blessed; while no sentence on the evil ever passes what is strictly right. God shows His mercy in the free preventing grace by which He calls us to be His children, under His rule and care. He shows His truth in the free rewarding grace, by which He crowns His own work in us and our work done in His strength. Yet, in the first He is true to His own nature and to the creatures whom He has made for good; in the second His love finds its full triumph.

God cannot deny Himself, and all His paths show Him merciful and true to all. But we learn what He is more plainly and in new ways, when we are true to Him and seek His mercy in the ways of which He tells us. With what manifold gifts of grace does He meet us, as in faith we do His will and plead His promises! How firmly sure we find His word in all things! How far beyond our hopes or thoughts are His mercies in pardoning and restoring and making blessed! The pledges of His mercy remind of His justice. The Sacrament of love bears witness how Christ died, that God might be true to His own holiness, and yet bestow on us His boundless mercies.

"*Oh how great is Thy goodness, which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee; which Thou hast wrought for them that trust in Thee before the sons of men!*"—Ps. xxxi. 19.

THE tokens of God's goodness stir up to holy fear and win to trust. As we learn to know God whose Name is Love, we learn to take heed how we live before Him. His goodness leads men to repentance, and does not forsake the most unthankful, while there is hope. But who can tell what store of good is open for us, what power of kindness is working in our behalf, if we welcome God's gifts in faith and use them in a spirit of dutiful obedience?

Even before the sons of men who own not God as their Father, the works of His goodness are plain. We ought to let the light, not only of our holiness, but of our joy and hope in God, shine before men. But there are blessings which the world knows not of and cares not for. Only to childlike fear and trust is it given to taste and enjoy these. They are so great as to outweigh all that must be parted with for their sake. The soul that can taste their sweetness loses its relish for sinful pleasures, and does not wish to try to find rest in earthly good. They are foretastes of the delights to which the soul can look forward. We prize them, not only for themselves, but for what they tell of God from whom they come. We hope for that inheritance which God's abundant mercy reserves in heaven, and rejoice in the Divine goodness which keeps us unto salvation. We long to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, and to search out the unsearchable riches of Christ.

When the stream is so full of blessing what must the source be! What must be the joy of the feast, when the crumbs that fall from the table are so to be desired! What must the goodness be from which such goodness flows! Well may we fear lest we lose any of our part in that goodness. Well may we trust Him who reveals it so plainly. We know not yet the sweetness of the hidden manna, or the joy of those who see God and know Him. Only those who have the vision of God can understand what He has laid up for them that love Him. As we give our hearts to Him, we find His heart open, with its infinite store of love. All His goodness is for us, as we are able to welcome and enjoy it.

"Thy righteousness is like the great mountains; Thy judgments are a great deep."—Ps. xxxvi. 6.

GOD'S righteousness is the outcome of His holiness. God's judgments show Him faithful to His word spoken in promise and in warning. The great mountains are called the mountains of God, as they seem most to tell of the strength and majesty of Him who built them. They stir not. However storm may hide them or gather in rage around them, they stand firm. When all has passed by, their calm heights are unmoved. So the righteousness of the God of love is strong and sure for those who trust Him. It is there always, and under its shelter they may dwell in peace.

As God's righteousness is imaged by the mountains, so the ocean in its unsearched depths and in its mighty movements, now in silent calm, now in loud storm, bearing everywhere blessing or ruin, is an image of God's judgments. Ungodliness may seem to gather like a flood, while those who are with Christ are overwhelmed. But in truth it is not so. God's judgments now are as when the flood came upon a world that would not be warned, and Noah found God faithful. When we are ready to lose heart among the ills of life, and all around us men strive as if left alone to work confusion, we are glad to lift up eyes of restful faith to the quiet hills from whence cometh our help.

God cannot but do right. His love and holiness are one, and are everlasting. Though the mountains be removed and the earth pass away, His righteousness remains in the new heaven and the new earth. We cannot search the depths of God's thought, and trace the rulings of His wisdom and the ways in which He makes good His word. Often by slow and hidden paths He moves towards the end. We cannot tell His plan till all is done. Then we see how He cares for His own, and watches those who think He need not be regarded. Sure of the righteousness of God, we can lift up our heads towards heaven. We can ourselves show the Divine strength made perfect in our weakness. While we wait on God in faith and obedience, His judgments shall bear us onward to the land of rest. We may be chastened lest we be condemned with the wicked. We shall gain ever more and more good till all God's promises are fulfilled.

"*Many, O Lord my God, are Thy wonderful works which Thou hast done, and Thy thoughts which are to us-ward.*" Ps. xl. 5.

WE need to remind ourselves of the great things which our God has done, to show His love and win our trust. For by unbelief or thoughtlessness we miss the blessing which He means for us. We look back and muse upon the works of power which have proved God's truth: we tell our hearts of the wisdom and love thus made known. Thought fails as we try to trace the ways of Providence in caring for us. The work of redemption and the means by which we have its blessings give new marvels, calling us to wonder and adore.

We do not know indeed the full meaning of even all the little that we can see. God does not show us how He works, or why He works as He does, or let us into the secret of His mind. We have more than enough to employ our utmost powers in learning from what is set within our reach. We are not able yet to see God's glory; but His goodness is made to pass before us. It is unreasonable and it is ungrateful to say that we will not, or need not, or can not, know anything, because God does not please to show us all. We are mysteries to one another and to ourselves, and we are prepared to feel unable to find out God. Perhaps the lowly place where we offer our sacrifice of praise, outside the veil which we may not yet pass, is that which best prepares for full knowledge in the light of God's presence hereafter.

As yet we only see that side of God's dealings which is towards us. That has to do with our duty, and we must give good heed to it. But we may rightly be led on in thought from the works to the Worker, and to His "thoughts which are to us-ward." We can gain the habit of seeing God in all things, and by prayerful meditation can know much of what the God of providence and grace is in whom we trust. Thus we shall grow to judge of all that comes to pass, less by sight, and more by faith that has often proved sight wrong. We shall learn to watch the signs of a great plan of good, arranged in the thought of a God of love, and by degrees unfolding itself. We shall know that in all things God is overruling man's mistakes or helping his weakness, making the best of a fallen and unbelieving world.

"*Forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; so shall the King greatly desire thy beauty.*"—Ps. xlv. 10, 11.

CHRIST calls His Church out of the world where He is not known as King. He left heaven for her; she must leave the world for Him. He will not be one of two lords whom she tries to please. Whatever rivals Him in her thoughts and love, all that tends to make her less true to Him, she must forget. Hearkening to His claim, thoughtfully weighing it, she must resolve to be His wholly and alone.

The world's ways are not her rule. The world's good will or good word is not what she lives for. Her aim is to be what He would have her be. She seeks not what the world gives, or the glory that the world admires. She is decked for her Lord's eye with what He knows the worth of. Her clothing is the pure gold of righteousness, wrought by patient continuance in well-doing, which His love has inspired. She is all glorious within, when she holds secret communion with Him.

Christ loves to see her love, awakened by His love, leading her to strive to be made more worthy of Him. He will greatly delight in that which she becomes for His sake and by His grace. Her spiritual offspring, children of the King, shall make His name known and His rule felt in all lands! When she is brought home, all marks of the world's influence shall have passed from her; trial shall have purified her, but shall leave no trace of pain. The love of her Lord shall be all to her. She shall respond to it with the unhindered devotion of the perfected, and in the enjoyment of full union with Him shall manifest His glory.

The words that tell of what Christ is to the Church have meaning for us, one by one. He draws near to each soul, and calls it to draw near to Him. Each can know that the whole wealth of the Divine love is for him, if he will have it. God will reveal it more to us, as we meet Him with what faith and love we can. All that we must leave for Him shall be made up for with manifold more even now. He will make our lives full of hope and gladness. He will give us those whom He wins to holiness by our means. We shall be clothed in our whole being with the wedding robe of His own righteousness. He will make us fit for Himself, pure and perfect even to the eye that searches into the secret heart.

"*Behold, Thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part Thou shalt make me to know wisdom.*"—Ps. li. 6.

BORN of the flesh we are flesh. The gifts which Adam lost when he fell he could not hand down to us. Evil is in our heart, in the very centre of our being, ready to show itself in all the goings forth of our life. Evil finds in us that which meets and welcomes it. Sin has darkened our souls, and dimmed the light by which we know truth and guide our steps. We are blinded to our own state, and miss the way to what is good. We are untrue to ourselves and unfaithful to God. We have no light of our own, no power to make heart and life pure. Wisdom must shine to us from above. God alone can give us what He asks us to have.

Even where the new nature is strong and active and watchful, the struggling of the old is felt. We find still a law of sin, which hinders the free movement of our beings in the way of God which our conscience owns as good. We cannot do the things that we desire. We do the folly that we hate and are ashamed of. Sins prove sinfulness; the growth tells of the root. We know how we have failed, when we see how we have yielded to be led by the movements of sin within us, and have set our wills against the rule of Him who calls us to walk in the light. We need no mere cleansing of the outward life. That is not enough for us; and we thank God it is not all that He desires. He means us to die to sin, that we may be free to seek righteousness in the life of obedience. He makes us wise with the wisdom that guides towards salvation.

By faith we learn the truths which the Spirit makes known, and understand the meaning of those truths, as they combine with one another and give a rule and an aim to our lives. They come into all our thoughts about all things, making us think and judge more and more in harmony with God. And God makes our heart right, so that each outward sign of what is within may tell of a secret inner life, enlightened by God's wisdom, and always true to the leadings of the Holy Spirit. The light that is in us is not darkness, but grows clearer from all mist. Where God's eye searches, He sees us what He makes us—more true to Him and to ourselves and to the end for which we were first created.

"*God shall send forth His mercy and truth.*"—Ps. lvii. 3.

GOD is true to His own nature; and so His love shows itself in mercy to those who need mercy. We are so helpless and have so sinned, that His love must always take this form to us. For every gift we have to thank Him, as a God who spares us and in pity blesses us, unworthy as we are. In His mercy God has given us promises, which we can trust Him to keep, and can humbly plead.

Not only does He reach down His arm to keep us from hurt among the ills and cares of this life, and make all things work together to bring us good. He knows how strong and fierce are the forces of evil that seek to destroy our souls. He is righteous, and true to the cause of righteousness in us. He pities our weakness to withstand the evil that rises within us, and that gathers against us from without. He teaches us to long for His mercy and His righteousness.

True to His word given to man as soon as he fell, God sent Christ from heaven to bring near righteousness, and be the means by which Divine mercy should reach mankind. Grace and truth came by Him. He made God known, and was the putting forth of the power of Divine love. As man, He was strengthened from heaven in His hour of trial and darkness. His strength, gained in all His life here, is a store ready for our use. There is a ceaseless "sending" from heaven through Him who unites us to our God. We can touch One who is always within reach, so that the virtue which goes forth from God may be present in our souls. The Saviour saves still. He will keep us in the hour of temptation, so that the adversary shall gain no advantage over us. The accuser shall be able to bring no reproach against us; for our Advocate shall plead in our behalf according to the will of God.

Let us have mercy on our own souls, and be true in heart. Let us watch and pray, and draw nigh to God humbly in those means by which His mercy is sent forth. Let us treat God as One who cannot break His word, and seek to be faithful to Him whose faithfulness is sure. Let us hunger and thirst after the righteousness of God, which His mercy gives to those who feel their want and trust His ways of grace. Then let the world and hell do their worst. God in heaven shall send forth His mercy and truth.

"My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise Thee with joyful lips."—Ps. lxiii. 5.

GOD only can meet the soul's wants. Herein is our greatness: nothing short of God is enough for those whom He made in His own likeness, and who can never find rest till that lost likeness is theirs once more. No richest banquet that the world prepares, or the flesh craves after, or the evil one spreads as a temptation, can give a joy like that which the soul can find in God.

To think towards God, to raise the mind to dwell upon His perfections, to yield to the power of God's love and let the heart's devotion be drawn to Him, is to find true rest for the soul. To give to Him who gave all for us, to serve Him who was among men as one that serveth, to do the will of Him who pleased not Himself but was willing to die for our life and joy, this has in it a high and holy satisfaction. When we take God at His word, we taste and see how full of grace He is, and how ready to lavish on us the rich gifts of His kindness. When we try to make Him real to us as the God He proclaims Himself to be, we find in the confidence of communion with Him and of work done in His Name, meat to eat that the world knows not of.

The joyfulness that God gives finds its voice in praise, and as we worship, there is a new drawing close to God, by which new gifts come to make our joy more full and sure. Even when the soul is low, and bowed down with a sense of sin or with a weight of care, we can rejoice in the Lord. For He can lift us up and heal us; He can make our trials bring us nearer to Him for blessing. And even when God seems to hide His face, and the soul is uncomforted by His consolations, we still know that God is behind the cloud and is true to Himself and us. We have His promises and we have His past mercies. We have proved Him and we trust Him. We praise Him that He is what He is, and that He is our God, who will make His love known in His time.

How can we be joyful enough, when we join in the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving which God has taught us to bring before Him; when God gives us nothing less than God; when we receive the Body and the Blood, by which Christ comes to dwell in us as the source of all power and joy!

"*Thou hast ascended on high, Thou hast led captivity captive: Thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them.*"—Ps. lxviii. 18.

DAVID fought for God and for God's people. It was the triumph of the God of Israel, when he set up the ark on Mount Zion. It was to David's God that the nations who had stood against him longest did homage and brought tribute. It was God's chosen race that David enriched with the spoils of God's foes. It was for them that the blessings to go forth from Zion, the dwellingplace of God, were prepared.

We rejoice in more than David knew of, which all this showed in type. Christ has gone up to the heavenly Zion. He has overcome sin and death. He has triumphed over the distrust and enmity of souls. He draws after Him a train of captives, who glory in His yoke, and ask what they can give or do to prove their devoted loyalty. Their hearts, though some among them resisted long, have yielded at last. Among men and for men He has received gifts from God as the fruit of His victory. He is man, representing mankind. Upon His humanity are poured without measure gifts, that He needs not for Himself, but gains for us. He has sent down the Holy Spirit, by whom all good things are made ours. For by that Spirit Christ, who has gone up to heaven, still dwells among us here. He is Emmanuel, God with us.

We wait for and treasure His gifts, because they unite us more closely in living union with Himself. He is Himself the gift that we long for and that He gives. He abides with us, while we still wander and struggle towards our rest. We abide in Him, and we are made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ. "We are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem." We have our share in all that He has won, in all that He is. Towards Him our thoughts turn and our hearts are drawn, and we know and feel that we have to do with higher things than our earthly toil and care. As the ark told of ceaseless intercourse between God and His old Church, so now Christ's presence on high bids us unite our worship with the offering ever being made, and assures of gifts of grace ever at hand for our faith to take with thankfulness.

"*He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth.*"—Ps. lxxii. 6.

WHILE sun and moon rule day and night, the kingdom of Christ shall be the witness for God with men. Homage shall be claimed for Him who ought to be feared, whose throne of judgment none can shake, who will surely make good all His promises and warnings. In the birth of Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit God has shown Himself jealous for righteousness, rich in mercy to revive and to restore. We learn God's love as we follow from Bethlehem to the Cross. The love that wins our trust warns us at the same time to live in holy fear.

By the power of the Holy Spirit Christ comes. Through Him we have life and flourish; without Him our souls wither and die. The earth has no sources of its own from which we can draw what makes us thrive for God. Only from Heaven can we get it. It is God's gift. Grace does not fail to cherish and refresh the seed of righteousness that has been sown. Our part is to see that we drink in "the rain that falleth oft upon us," making full and right use of the manifold grace of which Christ is the source. Having life from Him, He desires that we should have it more abundantly. Made righteous in power and in aim through His gifts, He would have us be filled with the fruits of righteousness.

We know the ways and means by which the Divine blessing comes. We know how it falls upon us quietly at all times, if we only watch for it, living in faith and prayer, Like the rain, it comes down often with largest power of good when the heavens have darkened over us. Like the rain, it spreads its influence over our whole being. It finds its quiet way to every root from which our spiritual growth should spring, that there may be an even bearing of fruit upward. It softens our hardness. It revives what has become parched and dry. It makes us able to bear and to profit by the heat of trial and the brightness of prosperity. We can bring forth the fruit of righteousness, because Christ has planted in our earthly nature the good seed from above which makes us children of the kingdom. We grow and thrive only while He comes down with His own refreshing grace, bringing forth into activity the new powers of life that He has given.

"*In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord: my sore ran in the night, and ceased not: my soul refused to be comforted.*"—Ps. lxxvii. 2.

PAST mercies are a great help to faith in times of trial; but we often need time and thought before we can have their comfort. It is hard at once to feel that the hand which brings us low is the same that has lifted up and blessed us, and that it is guided by the same love. The first cry to God will sometimes mean, "Art Thou indeed still the God whom I have known in days of quiet gladness?" It is well when we do not turn from God, but even with a trembling faith, which seems like no faith, seek Him.

All our life now may be called night. There is no night where we hope to be; but here our knowledge is very dim, and our souls are darkened by much shadow of sin; and so our joy is as darkness to the light in which the saints are blessed. Though the Sun of Righteousness throws His healing cheering rays upon us, yet He is not fully risen or clearly seen where we are. There are hours when all is dark around and in us. The world is gloomy, heaven is hid, and the comforts that our souls used to welcome are gone. We refuse all comfort short of Him, and the sure trust that we are in His care. While the darkness lasts, our hands are stretched towards Him without rest. This is the meaning of the words "My sore ran," We reach after God, that we may find Him and hold Him as our own; we work in the way of His will, that we may know Him and His truth. Tokens of His favour may be withheld, as they have been withdrawn; but it is God that we long for, not even those best gifts, in the enjoyment of which He may be forgotten. The night may be long, but the day is worth waiting for; and it surely comes to those who seek God in heart and life.

There is a night to be feared, which is the outer darkness beyond reach of grace. The night of our trial now warns us to fear that, and to take heed lest there be works of darkness which we have not cast off. It warns us to see that no sin hides God, and that the light in which we walk be not darkness. We are happy if we learn to refuse to be satisfied with any comfort while we have not God. The sense of want and the heart to pray prove His love.

"Let Thy hand be upon the man of Thy right hand, upon the son of man whom Thou madest strong for Thyself. So will not we go back from Thee: quicken us, and we will call upon Thy Name."—Ps. lxxx. 17, 18.

ISRAEL was strong with the might of Israel's God, who worked out His own ends for the world's good. When God withdrew His hand of blessing Israel's arm was weak. When Israel withdrew from under that guiding hand, the quickening touch was lost. The grace of God comes now through Christ, the Son of Man. We pray as members of Him. Our hope is that God will accept us "in the Beloved." We know of His might, and we pray that the Divine strength may come to us as members of the Son of man.

His Church is Himself. Each of us is a living part of Him, so that when we are strengthened, that by which He manifests Himself gains power. God's hand is laid upon us to rule, to shape, to comfort, to protect, to impart grace. We gain from God what we are to use for God. We gain through Christ what Christ uses us to put forth, in the activity of His own life. When we have gone back from God and the hand of warning stops our course, we pray for the restoring hand to hold us fast, while our faith grasps the grace that reaches down to us.

Life is not indeed life when the soul is without all the true joys of the living; when it is dead to God; when it is bound in sin's toils, and has no free power of action; when it does not reach after the true aim of life. Life must come before strength. Where the power to cry to the Life-giver is, there is the beginning of life. He who gives the power to pray will not quench the smoking flax. He will revive us by opening out the closed ways of communion with Him who is the Life. He will draw us by the strong influences of His grace, so that the temptations which would make us go back from Him shall lose their power. As we call upon Him with heart and will turned towards Him, we shall know more of the meaning of the Name on which we call. That Name shall tell us of Him who makes Himself known to us, renewing our spiritual life. Now we live by the faith of the Son of God; seeking and using the grace given, till we pass to that state of glory where life is perfect and for ever.

"*Glorious things are spoken of thee, O thou city of God.*"
Ps. lxxxvii. 3.

TO call Zion the city of God is to speak glorious things of her. The name tells of and means all that is glorious. God chose her alone for the dwelling-place of His glory, that from her He might send abroad the light of His truth and the power of His grace. Far and wide she was known, and all peoples knew that it was her God from whom her greatness came. What the Zion of old was spoke of yet higher and more glorious things. It had not entered into the heart of God's ancient people what was prepared for those who should learn to love Him in the Church of Christ, any more than we can conceive the glories of her future and perfected state. Even those who prophesied of the glory that was to be, knew but dimly what their words meant. Only the Spirit who inspired those words could reveal their depth of meaning.

The glory of the Church now, like that of Christ while on earth, is much veiled, so that the world sees it not. But that glory is real; and so is the virtue ever ready to go forth from the Divine Presence which makes it. All the nations feel the influence of a greatness unlike theirs, mysterious and unearthly. They change and pass away; she grows and gains strength, and draws men of all lands to seek a part in her glory. The citizens of the perishing empires of this world guard with jealous pride and care the rights to which they are born. No earthly dignity compares with that of being fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God, and admitted to the freedom of the Church of Christ.

What high privileges are ours! What hopes are before us! Among us the King of heaven makes His abode. We know how and where to draw nigh, sure of welcome and of blessing. We are safe from harm, while the city of God is our home, and we are true to her laws and her King. To that King we can appeal against the strongest power of earth or of sin. Holy Scripture tells of the glory of the city of God, and we find, as we prove her for ourselves, that the half has not been told. We hear from others glorious things of all that she has brought to them; and as those blessings become our own, we are roused to tell how we have proved the city of God to be the abode of the God of love.

"*He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.*"—Ps. xci. 11.

THE Most High is our defence: to Him we look for all our hope. The help of earthly friends calls for new gratitude to Him whose gifts they are. So we thank God that He tells us of holy friends who belong to a higher world, and who yet rejoice to come at His bidding, ready with sympathy and help. We know not much of what the joys and duties of God's angels are, or in what high ministries they may be employed apart from this world of men. We cannot tell how far hints found in Holy Scripture are meant to tell of their part in keeping in movement and order the mysterious forces of the natural world. We are sure that they are sent forth to serve those who serve God.

We cannot see them; but we know, on God's word, that they are at hand. Near to God, they behold His face, the face of our Father in Christ. They do not fail or forget, as human friends may. They do not die. They do not weary of our wants and weakness; they are not far off when, perhaps, we need them most. Had they no love of their own, making it their delight to serve us, yet they would fulfil their charge to keep in safety those of whom they must give account to God. Do they ward off dangers which we see not, or which we escape we know not how? Do they clear away the seeds of disease in the midst of which we move without a thought? Do they stand between us and the powers of darkness, making sin's onset less violent?

We shall not know what our debt is to those whom God gives to befriend us, till we share with them the joys of victory. It is well to think much of what God's Word tells about these holy beings. So we feel less lonely and weak. We are helped to realise and trust in the love and care of God, who gives us to their strong, gentle care. We have a new motive for holiness in their presence and their interest in our well-being. While we keep in the ways of faith and obedience which God has marked as ours, His angels watch our steps and wait to bring us good from God. They camp around us. When we are ready to fall they bear us up. It is not their will to leave us, till they have borne us away from life's trials to the rest of Paradise.

"*O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness: fear before Him, all the earth.*"—Ps. xcvi. 9.

DO the words speak of the holy place where God meets His people, or of the Divine beauty which men draw nigh to adore, or of the care that reverence teaches? The words seem to refer to the robes which the priests wore, when they went in before the Lord to fulfil their office. All was fixed by Divine rule; all had its spiritual meaning. Those who "bore the vessels of the Lord" had to be "clean." They put on them other dress than that which they used in the world's work. So they were reminded and warned of the solemn reality of the worship which they offered, and of the inward purity which the Searcher of hearts demanded.

We are priests unto the Lord, even those of us who only share the priesthood which is the dignity of all Christians. We all have our part in bringing before God the sacrifice of Christ, which is the one hope of man. We are in Christ brought into great nearness to God. His goodness must not tempt us to presume. Our faith in His love must not lead to any want of care. Our joy in what He is must not lessen our reverence. We fear, but before Him, seeking His presence. Our awe makes our love such as is fitting to offer to our God. We cannot flee or hide from Him; we would not miss the great privilege of meeting Him in worship. We try to come as we ought, and to give no slovenly or heedless service, however unworthy we may feel it to be.

God looketh not at the outward appearance, as if that were all. He looks at the heart, but asks that what the heart feels should be expressed. He asks that the inside of the cup and platter may be clean, and that the outside may be clean also; for He has made both. We draw near in worship, as if we saw Him and could hear His voice. From Him alone can come the garb of spiritual holiness which will bear His eye. From God likewise comes all wherewith we show outward reverence. All is His, and the costliest has in itself no worth to Him. But He plainly teaches how He welcomes the tokens of honour which proclaim to those who fear Him not that He is one to be feared, and which show the reverence of those who love to offer the best of what God has given them.

"*Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things: so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.*"—Ps. ciii. 5.

GOD cares for us in all our needs. He who gave us life, gives us wherewith to uphold it, repairing the waste that is ever going on. But youth soon goes, and the strength wears out. Desire fails, and the tired powers cannot regain lost spring and vigour. It is so with the body and with the mind. Not as the world gives, does God give to those who hope in Him. He takes away the taste for what is evil, and rouses a longing for the highest, fullest good. He fulfils the promise which is in the desires which He awakens.

He has given His Son. With Him, in Him, He freely gives us all things. The love of God is infinite, and no finite creature can ever exhaust its bounty. The Holy Spirit, who ever moves us to faith and hope, seeks to make us more and more know the love of God in Christ. Christ gives Himself anew in the blessed Sacrament, a pledge of all good for ever. What God teaches us to desire, and bestows upon us, not only delights but strengthens. That which satisfies now makes us need more to satisfy us; and more is ready, which again will enable us to seek for yet larger good. So through all eternity we may hope to rise higher, ever satisfied, and ever blessed in hunger for the boundless provision of good things.

As the eagle renews its plumage and mounts upward on strong wing, so God by the grace which He imparts fills us with ever fresh spiritual vigour. Eternal life which comes from union with God does not fade or fail. Its energies do not flag or weary, its satisfactions never pall. We may be young in innocence, guileless and pure in heart. We may be young in the free ready movement of each energy of life, and in the glad feeling of a strength that grows. We may be young in the hope of good awaiting us, of a great and noble part to be played, and the great reward of a trained nature to be won. We may be young in the fresh feeling of delight in living; breathing the air of a pure world, putting forth the life of a holy God, which that God has put within us. We may be young as those who think not of death, but who know that life here, lived in union with God, is but the beginning of a life that is everlasting.

"*He increased His people greatly; and made them stronger than their enemies. He turned their heart to hate His people, and to deal subtilly with His servants.*"—Ps. cv. 24, 25.

GOD brought the chosen race to Egypt; and kept them there till they were ready for the work to which He called them. The heart of the Egyptians was turned against them because of the favour of Heaven which they enjoyed. Sin does not come from God; but God's words and acts often become, through the perversity of sinners, the occasion of their greater sin. The sun, which makes growth and fruitfulness where life is, hastens the corruption of what is dead. The will which sets itself against God's truth and law becomes more hard in unbelief and disobedience. The hatred of the Egyptians made more marked the care of God for His people. Their sufferings made it impossible for them to feel Egypt a home, or to wish to remain when God bade them go forth.

Thus the trials to which God's blessing led were the means of further good. They trained Israel for the high mission to which they were called, and prepared them to welcome the summons to go forth. It is so with God's people always, who live in a world which knows not of Him who is their fear and hope. Because they are not of the world, therefore the world hateth them. They are spoken evil of, because they run not to the same excess of riot as those whose home is here. The growth of the Church rouses the world's hate; the world fears a power which it cannot understand, and which threatens to overpower it. Force and cunning are used against the Church more and more as God's work thrives.

So is the Christian life felt to be indeed that of strangers in a strange land. The service of the world becomes a heavier bondage, as our true Lord claims us and calls us to go forth free, and to worship Him. We listen to Him whom God has sent, as we hear Him tell us of a better land, whither He will lead us. We praise God for His mercy in making us His people and His servants. We own the need of all which weans us from the friendship of the world, and makes us ready to forego what the world lives for. We delight to see in the reproach of Christ a promise of better things than all the treasures that can be found here. He will make us stronger than our enemies if we will serve Him as His people.

"*He turneth the wilderness into a standing water, and dry ground into watersprings.*"—Ps. cvii. 35.

THE God of Nature and of grace works through means; but the means work for Him and at His word. When the habits and character of a people change, the land in which they live changes too. The once rich and fruitful Palestine tells by its condition now that it is no longer the holy land. Israel too has lost the rich supplies of grace which once were given overflowingly. If we live as if we were in a wilderness, without God and the workings of His love, where we are shall become a wilderness.

On the other hand, if Providence seem to have placed us in a barren and dry land, it is not God's meaning that we perish, or that our spiritual life fade and wither. The fountains of grace by which souls live are from Him; He can guide their channels so as to bring the source of all we need within our reach. Far away from the means of grace which we have been wont to enjoy and profit by, with all outward things changed, still God is the same. Christ still says "Come unto Me, and drink." The water will be as life-restoring, though it be borne to us in unaccustomed vessels and in new manner. He that believeth on Him, looking to Him through and past all means which He employs, shall never thirst so as to be unsupplied.

This is the sure hope to which we cling in times of spiritual desolation. Perhaps we have let some sin stop the flow of grace, or through neglect we have let it pass by unused; perhaps we have wandered from the pools which God has filled with water from on high, and have hewn to ourselves cisterns that fail in the time of need. There is no vigour, no growth in our souls. There is no fruit of love and of good works. There is a dryness which is like that of spiritual death, when we try to pray. It is as if the heavens were brass above us, and Sacraments were only outward forms. God can give again the freshness of feeling and of life that we have lost; He can make us fruitful once more. Christ is not out of reach. By His Spirit He is near, that we may come and drink into our whole being the waters of life, even the strength and refreshment which come from the union of our life with the life of the living God.

"*Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness.*"
Ps. cxii. 4.

THE pure in heart shall see God. The true souls, that seek truth that they may do it, find God not far off. And men see God in them; for the righteousness shown in their characters and their lives proves the presence of God. This is the case, even while they come to the light with but those natural powers, which God gave to men at first, and sin has not wholly spoiled. Christ rose, a Light to lighten the nations sunk in error and sorrow and sin. Christ is the true Light that lighteth every man with whatever light he has, in this dark world, and in our dark state now.

Christ not only shines down upon us, shedding light around; He makes a light within us, and gives power to see and use the truth. He not only opens up a world of joy to hope and faith; but He imparts an inward brightness, and makes the soul glad, even when gloom and storm are darkest. He not only shows holiness and sin in their true character, but He lights up the soul with what is pure; so that there is a shining out before the world of what has come from heaven. If we know the truth, we will do our part to help those who go on still in darkness not knowing whither. If we have found the joy which can alone make life bright, we will pray and work that others may be cheered. If we are being saved from the sin which darkens the soul and is the beginning of death, we will love to bring those near us to the same sources of grace.

We all have our dark days, when faith cannot see past the clouds, when truth seems to lose its clearness, when depression takes the place of joy in God, when there is no way plain by which besetting sin can be escaped, or indwelling sin cast out. But the night is not for ever. God is near, though He cannot be seen. There is ground for joy still, even when no joy can be felt. There is promise even in the painful horror with which we feel our way and struggle towards better things. A shadow may lie always on us; but it is the light that casts that shadow: we could not know of it were all dark. The light of glory is not yet. Enough for us now that a light from that glory falls upon us, showing us the darkness, and guiding us towards the full light.

"*The Lord is my strength and song, and is become my salvation.*"—Ps. cxviii. 14.

ALL our strength of any kind is from the Lord, who made us and upholds us. For all that we enjoy or hope for, we owe Him praise. We are apt to trust in our own arm, and glory in ourselves, as if we had made ourselves and were independent of God. So we are tried, that we may learn what He is to us, and how lost we are without Him. If we think to live and act apart from God, we soon find our strength turn to feebleness. If we give to others the praise which is God's due, we are surely brought to shame.

In the life of faith we abide in Him who abides in us as the Giver of all grace. So we are strong in the Lord. The powers of evil beset us, but we meet them in the Name of the Lord. They may vex like bees, but they perish like bees, and can sting no more. They may burn fiercely against us, but the fury soon burns out. Faith, again, does not dull our delight in all those harmless pleasant things with which God cheers life; it gives them a new value as the gifts of God, as hints of the higher pleasures of God's home. Nor does it dull our feeling of life's cares and griefs; rather it shows all these in their true meaning. We rejoice in the Lord always: our joy in Him is deepest when we look away to the light of His love from a darkened world. The same grace which makes us patient in tribulation, enables us to rejoice in hope.

We praise Him with brave hearts and joyful lips for the great things which He has done for us, and which He enables us to do. The best praise is in the earnest putting forth of the strength which He imparts. Our worship and thanksgiving are a means of drawing from Him new strength, and the right use of His strength gives ever new cause for songs of praise. The Lord is our salvation; for when we were yet without strength Christ died for us, and joined us to Himself in His risen life. He saves us day by day, enabling us to work out our own salvation, giving us the fear and trembling which make us watchful lest we lose our hold on Him, and teaching us to rejoice in God our Saviour. We shall know how great His love has been when we are safe, and can praise Him for ever in holy work for which He has made us strong.

"Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage."—Ps. cxix. 54.

WE are not at home here: we seek a country. The way by which we go is often rough and weary. There are many hardships to be met and foes to be faced. As pilgrims we must lay aside much that we would like to keep, but which would be a weight to hinder us. But there is great joy in our life. Not only have we hope of rest in the abiding places of the Holy Land; we can sing now for joy of heart, knowing what is already ours.

The statutes of God which make known His will reveal Him to us in His holiness and love. He is our God, who cares for what we are, and prepares the home, for which He trains and fits us day by day. He claims us as His own, by teaching us how He would have us live and what He would have us grow to be. He treats us as citizens of the better country, even while we are living here on earth; for He teaches us the laws of that country, and tells us to be guided by them. We are shown the way, so that none need err who in earnest wishes to be right, and listens for the clear voice of God. While we are in that path of obedience, we have cast on God the care of our souls, and He is pledged to keep us. Hard it may be at times, and dark and lonely; but it is the path which leads to the good end, and the laws of God are our sure guide in it.

As we obey, we grow to be in will one with Him whose will those laws make known. They are our songs, even when we have to make a strong effort to bend our will to yield to them; for by them God warns us, and guards us from our evil selves. They are in a higher way our songs, as we learn to love them, and find them growing to be more and more not only the expression of God's will, but of our own. They have great promise in them. They tell us to look forward to that time when we may be perfect and complete in all the will of God. If there be joy now in knowing of God's care for our holiness, and being guided by His laws, what shall the joy be when there shall be no need of warning against sin or call to obedience, when the pilgrimage is over, and our Father's home is reached! What shall the joy be, when the whole life is the glad expression of love to God, whose love is fully known!

"Look Thou upon me, and be merciful unto me, as Thou usest to do unto those that love Thy Name."—Ps. cxix. 132.

THE eyes of the Lord are "in every place, beholding the evil and the good." In another way they are "over the righteous." The look of God is like His word: it is with power; it leaves no man unchanged for good or evil. Nothing escapes God's eye, and He is never a mere looker on. His will is always at work upon all whom He sees, making His judgments or His mercies felt. He reveals His Name—the Holy and the Merciful One.

God is loving unto every man; but only those who receive His love as a sanctifying power find true blessing from it. They who love His Name, treasure and meditate upon what they know of Him; and ever seek to enlarge their knowledge, so that that Name may mean more to them. They love to obey His will, and long for greater will and power to obey it more perfectly. Thus they have in themselves a sure proof that God looks on them in mercy; for they know that His love is changing them and drawing them to Himself. If we can humbly trust that we are among these, then we can feel glad confidence. God draws nigh in mercy to all who draw nigh to Him, loving His Name. So this may be our heart's prayer in all the hours of our life. It is enough if God look upon us.

We need mercy, for we need many things, and we are unworthy. We are weak, and we long to be gently dealt with. The work of Christ is all a work of mercy, and the power of that work enters into the whole of God's dealings with His redeemed creatures. We have sinned, and God must look on us while we show our shame, praying for pardon and renewal. God must search us for that sin which is hidden from us, but is on that account more deadly. We are tried; God must look on us to help us and uphold us, and make our sorrows means of good. We are tempted; God must look on us and with His grace keep us from falling. We have work to do; God must look on us to bless our toil and make our duties a training for higher trust. As He looks on us and we try to meet His look with faith and follow the pointing of His will, we shall prove how great His mercy is, and learn to love His Name more truly.

"*Have mercy upon us: for we are exceedingly filled with contempt.*"—Ps. cxxiii. 3.

CHRIST was despised and rejected of men. He bore the shame as well as the pain of the Cross. The world knew Him not, nor cared for all He spoke and did. So it always has been with His Church, in which He now speaks and acts. Those who do not know wherein the Church's great strength lies, or the meaning of her life, look on her with a proud scorn. To them her zeal is folly, her patience is weakness, her doctrines are vain words, her means of grace are empty forms. She is disliked, because she says boldly that there is One whom man is bound to hear and to obey. She does not offer a set of opinions; but proclaims the truth. She does not advise a useful way of life; she teaches with authority how every man ought to walk so as to please God.

Men laugh at her claims, even while they resent fiercely her denial of their freedom to think and live as they will. They try to bind her, as her Lord was bound; and to point to her, wounded and cross-laden, as one surely doomed. We do not ask mercy for her from the world. We pray, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." We plead with Him that His Church may pass through humiliation to glory, and that the grace she gains in suffering may make her more able to win men to fear and love her God.

If we suffer as Christians, the promise which cheers the Church holds good for each of us. Only be it our care that no want of meekness or wisdom, no evil-doing, bring on us the contempt of the world. Then we are happy and can give God praise, even though in our weakness and self-distrust we plead with God in faith to lay on us no more than we can bear. The "reproach of Christ" is better than the favour of the world that brought Him to the Cross. It is indeed high honour to be counted worthy to suffer shame for His sake. As God is faithful, He will honour those who for His sake are willing to bear shame. If Christ be our Master, it is enough for us to be as our Master. We do not refuse to bear for His sake something like what He bore for ours. We dare not save ourselves by being ashamed of Him and of His words before men. We trust the promise that the Son of man shall confess us before the angels of God.

"*Lift up your hands in the sanctuary, and bless the Lord.*"
Ps. cxxxiv. 2.

IT is a call to those who stand serving God in His temple which is answered by a blessing spoken in His name. They whose work it was to guard God's house, to tend the lamps, to keep alive the fire of the ceaseless offering, to watch before the presence of Israel's Lord, might need no call to praise. Everything around them told of how the Lord that made heaven and earth had chosen Zion. All they did in the exercise of their office reminded of some past mercy, or pleaded some treasured promise. To have His sanctuary among them, with all the holy ways ordained by God for meeting with His people, was enough to fill them with thankful joy and hope. Heartily they welcomed the call to bless the Lord, and heartily did they bless in return with the blessing which God gave them to bestow.

Shall our hands hang down and our hearts be cold? Surely we ought to call one to another to bless Him from whose hand we have received so many blessings. He is now revealed to us more plainly, and comes more near to us. He dwells with His people. He teaches us where He waits to receive our worship, and how to offer it to Him so as to be sure of His blessing. He has made the heavens, that His chosen may be hereafter with Him there. He has made the earth, and He comes now to be with men, making the place of His presence holy ground. We bless Him for what He is, and for the power of knowing and of loving Him.

God's blessing is in deed and in truth, not in word only; and our hands, which are lifted up in praise, must be also ready to work and to fight for Him. We can bless God at all times and in all places, in all we do, and all we are. There is a special call to praise Him in the courts of His house, in the common worship of His Church. God blesses us in all ways, in our whole life, and in each part of it. There is a special blessing which is "out of Zion," which is given through the ministrations of God's Church, which is the pouring out of that blessing which Christ pronounced as He ascended. It is the work of the Holy Spirit, by whom Christ is present and gives us of the fruit of His finished work.

"*O God the Lord, the strength of my salvation, Thou hast covered my head in the day of battle.*"—Ps. cxl. 7.

WHAT God has been, God will always be. Our life is a long warfare. The day of battle lasts till we depart to the peace which God gives to those who have overcome. The day of battle must be, as the words mean, a day of putting on armour. We have none of our own, which will turn aside the weapons of the foe. By ourselves we are as weak as David was, when he stood up against Goliath, or was hunted by the hosts of Saul. We must be armed with what God gives. We must take it and put it on; we must ever watch, lest we lose it, or leave an opening where the foe may strike. We must have our strength always renewed, and be on our guard not to grow cold or heedless or self-trustful.

Christ had His sore battle, and He won. The Divine strength made His human nature strong; God covered His head, while He bruised the head of the serpent, and became the author of eternal salvation. Now in Him God saves us. The power of God, which our faith is called to lay hold on, keeps us safe, till the day of battle ends in our full salvation. We cannot go from the battle, except we yield to be taken and destroyed. God has called us to be soldiers, and the powers that are against us will not be at peace. If we are on God's side, God's foe will be our foe, active, watchful, untiring, cunning, violent. The world, which the wicked one rules as prince, will seek to draw or drive us out of the shelter of God's care. And evil desires still unsubdued will rise up to alarm us.

Many a time we shall be tempted to faint, or turn back, or yield. We shall tire in a war which seems to have no end and bring peace no nearer. We shall feel the smart of wounds, and the pain of falls from which we have found it hard to rise. But God is strength that does not fail. Only let our trust be in Him who makes us one with Him through Christ. He will cover us in the heat of our spiritual conflict, shadowing us with His comfort. He will enable us to lift up our head boldly, wearing for a helmet the hope of salvation, and pressing on bravely to the end. He will make the strokes of evil harmless against our spiritual life. He will keep us safely till, more than conquerors in His might, we wear the crown of everlasting righteousness.

"All Thy works shall praise Thee, O Lord; and Thy saints shall bless Thee."—Ps. cxlv. 10.

GOD is glorified in His works. The Creator is seen in what He has made, the Lord of Nature in what He does. Vastness awes, beauty charms, order and harmony of movement fill with wonder. The perfect finish of the smallest and most hidden thing proclaims One who is Himself perfect. The world of being is no mere exhibition of what its Author and Owner can do. It is full of signs of His care for His creatures. God is praised by whatever meets the wants and helps the comfort of all that lives and feels. He is praised by each instinct of gentleness or affection in conscious creatures, by which they cheer the life of one another.

The greatest witnesses to God's glory are His saints. So far as they are indeed holy ones, they are so because of His presence with them and the changing power of His indwelling Spirit. It is God's own nature that masters in them what is unholy and impure. They are the greatest of His works on earth. For they are being formed into the likeness of that man who is God; they are being hallowed and trained to perfection as the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty. The Lord hath made all things for Himself. In some way His love will shine forth even through those who mar His work in themselves. If we are in any true way holy, we praise Him in what by His grace we are, we can bless Him for the boundless hope which He gives.

We can trace the wise workings of Divine goodness in all that is and lives around us. We can mark the growth of the Church, and the marvellous movements of grace. We can give glory to God, as we watch the change that goes on in men and women under the influences of Divine love. We can wonder at the beauty of souls, the pure, bright innocence of those who have not lost the fresh mark of God; the strong brave truth of those who know their calling and fight hard in the might of Christ; the peace of those who have fought the good fight, who with trained virtue and with proved faith wait for their crown. We know why God is to be praised. As we grow in holiness our praise shall come from fuller knowledge and deeper feeling. When we are worthy to look on God we shall bless Him worthily.

"*The Lord preserveth the strangers.*"—Ps. cxlvi. 9.

GOD taught His people to remember that they had been strangers in the land of Egypt. He gave them many rules which bound them to show kindness to those who were strangers in their land. God "loveth the stranger in giving him food and raiment." His care for their needs calls His Church to work with Him, not only in providing for their bodies, but for the nourishment and comfort of their souls.

The lonely, who are parted from home and friends, are watched over by God, who bids them find a friend in Him. If they have left all at His word and for His sake, going out like Abraham into a strange land, His presence goes with them. He gives them new spiritual kindred and possessions, even now in this time, an hundredfold for all they have forsaken. When old companionship and pursuits must be laid aside as weights in the race, He gives the boldness of faith and hope, and braces for the effort of devotion. When, for God's sake and the truth's sake, hatred and persecution must be borne, and even those of one's own household become foes, the Lord upholds and saves. When there is an awkwardness in beginning a new life among the earnest, and the ways of religion seem strange, God's helpful sympathy cheers.

Strangers and pilgrims, who own that their rest is not here, and who seek home in a better country, are led on in safe ways by Him whose loving-kindness fails not. He keeps them from harm. He lets them taste beforehand of the good things of the promised land, and shows to their hope bright visions of its glory. If we are of one mind with Him, we will seek to share in His works of love, and be the ministers of His kindness to the lonely-hearted. We will take care lest we wound those whom God is healing, and give them wrong thoughts about God.

What though we are strangers now on earth, with few to care for our well-being, if we are not strangers in the Church of God or aliens from the commonwealth of Israel! If we are fellow-citizens with the saints who seek the things above, Christ is with us now, preserving us for the home and fellowship of the blest. We can look forward to being with Christ in the household of God on high, where the righteous are safe with God.

"Lord, lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon us."
Ps. iv. 6.

THOSE who turn from God wander on in darkness and find rest nowhere. Even if they gain all they seek as their end, it fails to satisfy, and leaves them still asking "Who will show us any good?" The goodness which is in these things is lost to them, while they strive after and have them apart from God. What they gain they cannot keep; it all must perish in the using. They have no hold upon the Source of good; they know not of the lasting worth of His favour and blessing. And so if we bear loss for His sake, those who live only for the world think that our all is lost and our hope gone. They ask in scorn, "Who will show us any good?"

If we have learned to walk by faith, not by sight, we have our quiet answer ready. God shines down light and comfort on those who look to Him. In the face of Jesus Christ the glory of His goodness has been seen. Through Him still comes the same light to bless prosperity, to guide safely so as to make even the way of trial a path of peace, and to gladden with Heaven's comfort in the dark hours of life. There is indeed a passing joy in worldly pleasure and success—a joy which often enables the heart to forget for a while its need of God. There is no hope in time of loss or care, if God's face be turned away, or if there be no faith to meet His look of sympathy and receive His waiting grace.

Better than the best gifts is the smile of the Giver of all good—the light of that Countenance which no clouds can wholly hide from faith, and which shall one day be lifted up where nothing veils its glory. Our joy no man taketh from us; for man does not give it and cannot rob us of it. The world may cause us tribulation, but He who has overcome the world bids us be of good cheer, and in Him be more than conquerors. We have our Corn and Wine to strengthen us and make our hearts glad, and be to us the pledge of all good. We receive sacramentally Him who is the living Bread, and whose precious Blood refreshes the weary. The anointing of the Holy Spirit makes us of a cheerful countenance, as with faith and love we meet the kind fatherly eye of God.

"In the Lord put I my trust: how say ye then to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain?"—Ps. xi. 1.

OUR trust is in the Lord, not in our own wisdom or strength, or in any help apart from Him. When trial comes, as it must, we do not withdraw the confidence which we have placed in Him once for all. While we are careful to be in the place of duty to which He has called us, we can cast all other care on Him. We have a quick answer to the misgiving of our own failing hearts and the temptings of those who taunt us with threatened ruin. We dare not seek quiet and safety in ways of our own choosing. We need never be scared from the post of duty. If our obedience must be even unto death, and the worst form of death; that death only puts us far from harm, and safe for ever in His care. Not a sparrow falls without our Father, by whom the hairs of our head are numbered. The birds follow the instinct which God has given them, and fly out of reach of what alarms. We follow the divinely-given instinct of faith. We know that the God in whom we trust is with our souls in all that He calls us to do or to endure. We do not flee from our place, lest in so doing we should flee from our one sure Help, and go alone into new danger.

With a like quiet steadfastness we put aside those who would tempt our souls from God's path of faith and holiness. We trust His sure word of truth, and the loud questions of unbelief do not scare us from what has been our rest. We refuse to be driven away into the desert places where God's voice is unheard. And we trust in the Lord as the Giver of grace. We would not go from where He tells us, and we have proved that His loving Presence waits for souls. We would not forsake God's appointed channels to seek salvation through means of our own heart's devising. "In the Lord put I my trust" is the voice of lowly thankfulness and quiet settled resolve. With this we meet those who would have us risk the loss of our lives by saving them, or the comfort of them, through unfaithful flight. With this we encourage ourselves to abide in the mountain of the Lord, sure that His truth and grace are fully given there for our salvation.

"*Thou hast visited me in the night season; Thou hast tried me, and shalt find nothing; I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress.*"—Ps. xvii. 3.

ONLY One could ask the all-seeing eye to search His man's heart, sure that no flaw or fault was there. The prince of this world found nothing in Him to meet evil with a welcome. God found each power always quick to fulfil all righteousness.

We cannot look up to God as those that are without fault. The just man falleth seven times a day. The strongest fails through weakness. But we may be sure that, though God sees us frail, He also knows us to be true. This is the proof that God and we are at one, that we are working together against sin. This is the ground of our hope in looking forward to the end, and of our faith that God hears us when we pray. The honest heart is ours as God's gift; our will is led by the Holy Spirit. We must win at last, if we are working along with God, seeking what God seeks. If we are careful that our mouth transgress not by going past what we desire with our heart and strive to aim at in our lives, then we can pray with boldness.

It might seem as if such words of appeal to God's knowledge of the heart were scarce fitting from the holiest. But they are meant to be used by the weakest who has hope. They tell us of a blessed sympathy between God and all His people, between the Saviour and those whom He is saving. We can be sure that God is true to us, and that He knows we are true in heart to Him; however our lives show imperfection, and our efforts to be what He would have us be are disappointed. So we shrink not from the eye of the Heart-searcher. We are glad to be tried; for we wish and purpose firmly that all our deeds shall be wrought in God.

In the quiet hours of night, when the soul is alone with itself and God, and no eye but the Divine watches us, we feel Him near. In the dark hours of sorrow, when the world's brightness has passed, and heaven seems to send no consolation, and manifold subtle temptations test how far we live to please Him who looketh to the heart, God visits us and tries us with His fire. What cause for thankfulness, if He gives us grace to speak to Him from a guileless heart, so that our prayers tell how we long and try to live!

"The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble; the Name of the God of Jacob defend thee."—Ps. xx. 1.

THE king made ready to meet his foes. The people whom he led forth called for a blessing on his arms, and sang of triumph as if already won. They had sure ground for trust in the God who made Himself known to their father Jacob. He chose to dwell in Zion, and there to meet His people. He welcomed them when they drew nigh to Him there in those ways of worship which He ordained.

We can make the words our own, as we join in heart and will with our anointed King and His great cause. He is one with His people now, while they bear the perils and hardships of their war with the forces of evil. We hail Him the Conqueror in whose triumph we can claim a part, as He enables us to overcome. He shows that it is in His heart to renew His victories, giving to His Church and to each of her members the Divine resistless power which is His own. We plead the burnt-offering and the meat-offering, which He in His human life brought before God. In the one He devoted Himself to God, giving up each power of His being to be all spent for God in continual service; in the other He vowed Himself, for God's sake, to all loving work for the good of men. And while we thus plead, we bring like sacrifices of our own, asking that He may give them worth and make them acceptable. Our trust is only in what He has done, and in the help which He ever gains for us and imparts to us in His Church.

As we grow more one in aim with Christ, we become more one with Him in strength. For while we pray that His will be done, He gives power to labour for that end. And then, as we put forth our loyal zeal in labour and in war with sin, the hope grows more sure that what we do and suffer shall not be in vain. We strive to live more for God, laying ourselves with less and less reserve upon His altar to be consumed in His service. We dedicate ourselves for God's sake to works of love in man's cause. So are we able to rejoice more in the purifying of heart which makes the fulfilling of God's counsels be the fulfilling of our own desires. Through the day of trouble we have peace in Him who has overcome the world, and in whom we are strong.

"*His soul shall dwell at ease.*"—Ps. xxv. 13.

GOD leads in safe ways those who live before Him in holy fear. He makes plain the path of His will to those who wish to walk in it. So they learn and choose what God's wise fatherly care chooses for them. They ask how they can please Him, and He makes them wise unto salvation.

While we thus keep hold of God's hand we are safe from harm. Warned by the laws which tell God's loving will, we shun the ways of sin that lead to shame and sorrow; we keep far from the snares into which the heedless fall; we refuse the joys which hurt the body and stain the soul; we check the restless longings which rob the heart and mind of the peace of God. The fear of God makes us press and keep close to Him, that we may gain light and strength, and find the rest for our souls which He alone can give.

We may have to meet manifold trials. Losses of earthly good may follow fast on one another, till there seems little left; yet all this need not move the soul from its calm enjoyment of the good things that are for ever. The ease of one who fears God aright is not a thing of now and then; it is an abiding state. The worth of eternal things seems more, as they come to be the only things. The joys which God's kindness gives to cheer our way, and which He has formed us to relish, are pleasant to us. But they do not give lasting rest. They come and go. One follows the other, and soon all have passed by. The thought of losing them disturbs our calm enjoyment of them. And at times there comes a dark loneliness, in which the soul feels as if all the lights of earth had gone out.

Our peace must not depend on anything which is only of earth and time. Nor need it. When in holy childlike fear we seek to please God, His fatherly love is able to please us. He gives new pleasantness to all our innocent earthly joys, teaching us to look on them as tokens of His good will, sent to us with His blessing. He shows us how to gather happiness around us, which we can keep when we pass to new worlds. We are able to bear toil or pain or loss, while we find the words of Christ true, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you." We can be of good cheer, strong in union with our Lord, overcoming the world, and abiding calmly through storm and darkness.

"*Thou shalt hide them in the secret of Thy presence from the provoking of all men: Thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues.*"—Ps. xxxi. 20.

THE fear of God drives out all other fear. Trust in God makes fear of Him free from torment and a safeguard of peace. We fear Him whom we trust; we trust Him whom we fear. So He keeps us glad to be near Him, watchful lest we stray, and armed against temptation. The world, in the pride of its unbelief, scorns those who take into account eternal things which it knows not of.

Though all men join to carry out the plan of evil, we need not be upset or shaken. God draws us apart into a safe shelter, where our souls can be at peace. In His presence He is all. With the eyes of our soul fixed on Him who is invisible except to faith, we see only Him. Listening to Him, we heed no other voice. Knowing that He watches over us, we think only of how to please Him. He hides us, though the world is not aware of the defence He builds around us: He covers us with that unseen hand, the comfort and help of which are the secret of those who fear and trust Him.

When men fight against us with false tongues, we consider Him who endured the contradiction of sinners. Even the wounds of slander shall be means of health. When the truths of God are questioned or denied, and the noisy strife of tongues threatens the steadiness of faith and the peace of the soul, there is but one refuge. From disputings about God we flee unto God. We find in devotion our best way of help against the evils of controversy. In meditation and prayer and praise we draw near; and God spreads an atmosphere of peace around us. In His holy presence our thoughts of pride and self-assertion dare not show themselves. The loud wrangling voice is hushed and awed into reverent gentleness. We dare not think of triumph for our own opinion; we can only seek truth: we seek it in the light which God gives, and in the serious quiet which His Spirit makes.

How shall we ever learn the deep meaning of the truth that our lives are hid with Christ in God! Oh that we might feel more how real a fact our union with Christ is, and, living more as if we knew the fact, might have more of the peace which He gives to those who are in Him!

"*How excellent is Thy loving-kindness, O God! therefore the children of men shall put their trust under the shadow of Thy wings.*"—Ps. xxxvi. 7.

GOD'S loving-kindness is precious; for from it comes all the good that all creatures receive. He cares for the wants of beasts and birds. He gives them instinct to seek what He provides and to watch against harm. He who does not forget one sparrow is our Father. We are His offspring, made in His own likeness, living by a life that is from Him.

In a higher sense, those who are one with the Son of Man have claims upon the Divine Fatherhood. The blessings of God's providence are shared by those who care not for the blessings of His grace. God gives the good things which unreasoning animals enjoy, to men who ask for nothing more. Those who obey the laws of nature, seeking only earthly good, have the "bread enough" which is the hireling's portion. As children of God, alive to the greatness of our calling, we feel that our faith cannot be too entire and our hope of good cannot be too enlarged. He who spared not His own Son to give us the place of children, will keep back nothing that is good from the infinite resources of a Divine Father.

Under the shadow of His wings we are sure of safety. The image speaks of the simplicity of trust, and of the gentleness and self-devotion of the protector. He is a shadow from the heat of temptation. He hides us from the powers of evil that hover near to prey upon our souls. He calls us together that we may be united in the feeling that we share one shelter and have one Guardian.

As the shadow of Christ upon the Cross is said by old writers to have fallen upon the dying penitent and relieved him from the sun's glare, so does God soften our sorrows. The fierceness of the trial makes the quiet shade more marked and more precious. God spreads His sheltering wings so widely that all can find room. Like the pillar in the wilderness, like the far-reaching holy influence of which the temple was the centre, so now the ministries of grace in the Church meet our trust, while they rouse our hope and enlarge our desires. We learn how precious is the loving-kindness of the Lord, how exhaustless are its treasures, ready for the children of men who put their trust in Him.

"*Sacrifice and offering Thou didst not desire; mine ears hast Thou opened.*"—Ps. xl. 6.

DAVID is awed as he looks back upon the deep out of which he has been raised. How can he come aright before a God who so utterly abhors sin, and has poured out such untold gifts of grace upon the sinner? He knows, as well as we do, that God needs not what we can give, that we have nothing that is not from Him. He knows that sacrifices are in themselves of no power, that they are only appointed ways of approach, through which the devout and faithful unite themselves with that to which God gives worth. Guided by the Spirit, he speaks before of the offering of his Son after the flesh, the Incarnate Son of God.

The words mean more to us than they did in the mind of him who spoke them. We, in all our lowly penitence and all our gladness of thankful hope, claim oneness with Him who was slain from the foundation of the world, in whom is the reality of all types and shadows. He took the servant form, and with unswerving, unhalting will, did the work given Him to do, till death sealed His obedience. So Scripture tells us how Scripture was fulfilled. So we know how to come before God, sure of being accepted in the Beloved. God's will was done in the willing offering of Christ's work and self: it is being done in us, if our living union with Christ is felt as a reality which brings hope and obligation.

We know what is the will of God, even our sanctification. The work of Christ is means and pledge of all. Jesus Christ the righteous is the propitiation which the Father accepts. We can "show the Lord's death;" and we can present Him as our peace, through whom God's love is known and enjoyed. We can, in union with Him, offer ourselves, our souls and bodies, a reasonable service. God has given us ears to hear, and has made His word come to us clearly and with power. His Spirit enables us to hearken so as to know how we ought to walk and to please God. Our outward service is thus no vain effort by ourselves to appease wrath, or to buy God's favour. We are able to do the will of God from the heart, glad to know how our Father wills that we should come to Him and live before Him.

"*God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.*"
Ps. xlvi. 1.

HAPPY are we if we know God, and can trust that we are known by Him! While all else changes, He is the same. To Him we can flee for shelter while the storms of life pass. We ought to keep in mind our danger and our safety. We ought to make sure our rights in God, and train our faith to act upon the truth of what He is. There is no place for fear, though heaven and earth pass away, if God be left; for His word will not fail. We need not shrink or faint before any work or foe, if we can humbly trust that we put ourselves into God's care. If we let Him guide us, He will guard us. Danger will prove the refuge good, and will drive us closer to its shelter. Trouble shall give experience that shall beget a dauntless hope.

The saints of old knew God too well for fear and doubt to shake their peace. They were quiet from fear of evil, when all that had seemed firmest in the world shook. When the nations like a troubled sea were tossed, and men's hearts failed them for fear, they looked out from their refuge and saw the signs of their redemption. Christ slept in the storm; so the Christ in them was at rest. They knew in whose safe keeping all things were, and that though the proud waves of man's wilfulness lifted themselves up, yet that God's will could stay them.

We are not thoughtless or unfeeling. We grieve when the powers that rule on earth are not like Mount Sinai from which God spoke His law, but like Babel lifted up in defiance of Heaven. We grieve when the people have not the great calm which comes where Christ's voice is heard. We grieve for those who have no ark in the flood, for those whose house is not built on the firm rock, for those who drift with no anchor made fast to what is eternal. We seek for more faith and more quiet strong patience. The Church has always found God true. Our temptation is but what is common to men. We look up and lift up our heads. We thank God for light to lead us, for strength to enable us, for hope to cheer us on. We watch and strive humbly and in quiet to do what God sets before us, till we look back on all from the haven where we would be.

"Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me."—Ps. li. 10.

BY our fruits we know what we are. If we would live a new life we must have a new heart. It is not enough to improve the old; the new must take its place. There is more than a stain to be washed away, more than a wound to be healed. Life cannot enter and overcome death till the Spirit of God breathe upon us. Only the Creator can call into being things that are not. Only He who made man good at first can give to us a new power of goodness.

The world in its beauty and order did not unfold at once. So it is with what God does in man. Christ was the beginning of the new creation, when He brought into our nature fresh life and power. In each of us the pleading of our weakness was answered when we were "baptized into Christ," and we "put on Christ," receiving into us the quickening life of God. We are often warned of the evil still in us strongly. We feel how far the work of our creation "in Christ Jesus," "in righteousness," is from being finished. We learn our need of God, that His work may go on to its end. Only from Him can that clean heart come, in which no guile is found, in which no dark thought or wish rises, which stirs to no act or word of sin. Only God can find and take away the last lurking remains of what is unfit for God's pure eye, so that we may be glad in His Presence, knowing that guileless confidence which sin spoils.

As the clean heart grows strong, and is able to reach towards God with true, single aim, our spirit is made right within us. Sin makes us weak in will, soon turned out of the right path, soon wearied, soon afraid. We pray to be rid of that which numbs our strength, and to be renewed after the image of Him who created us. Pure in heart we can see God. He makes Himself known to our faith; we are sure of His word, and go forward in His light and power. We do not doubt the love that cares for us and the grace that is able to make us holy. So with no shrinking we move onward, firm to do what is right. No more unsteadiness of aim, no more halting between two ways, no more trying to serve two lords. Our minds are made up, and with hopes fixed upon the goal we run our race with patience.

"*My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise. Awake up, my glory; awake, psaltery and harp: I myself will awake early.*"—Ps. lvii. 7, 8.

A HEART that is neither true nor strong can be "merry" in the bright hours. Those whose joy depends on outward things can "sing psalms" when their heaven has no cloud. The fixed heart is always ready. It does not wait for God's gifts to make it glad and thankful. It rejoices in the Lord always. Whether He deal with the soul in the way of warning and trial, or in the way of consolation, He is the same, and may be the same to the soul.

The apostle could sing of his infirmities, as he found the power of Christ more fully resting on him. And it may be that faith learns more of Divine goodness and of the love on which the soul can lean, when the soul is bowed down and has no power to help itself. Suffering need make no change in the devotion of the heart, though it change the matter of the song and the manner in which the praise is offered. Our Lord has told us plainly of the cross and of the way of self-denial. We have counted the cost, and have set our wills firmly to pass after Him where He leads. We thank Him, if the weight of our cross tells us that we are still His, and brings us closer to Him for support. We thank Him, if the calls to self-denial cheer us with the good hope that we are going onward in the narrow way. S. Paul and S. Silas praised God in the prison before the doors were opened.

So we praise God in the night of our darkest trial. We do not wait for the sunshine to make us forget the gloom. We do not let our souls sleep with sorrow. Our sorrows remind of Him who watched in the night of His agony for us. We look beyond the passion; we think of the joy set before Him and before us. We are "very early" where all tells that He lives, as He died, to be our life and to gladden us with a joy that no man can take from us. So it is not the pleasantness of our worldly life that awakes our souls to praise; the inner joy that God bestows gives our life in the world a pleasantness in spite of all that tries us. When we think of our treasure and our hope in God, no wonder if like David we feel that words are weak, and call on "psaltery and harp" to help in telling our hearts' praise.

"*My soul followeth hard after Thee: Thy right hand upholdeth me.*"—Ps. lxiii. 8.

WE hope in Him who has been our help. Our faith can be calm and full of joy; for the wing of God's care is spread between us and harm. Where we go in the way by which He leads us, there shall not fail the same strong defence, the same peaceful shade. Even when the wing that shelters us takes the form of a cross, we think of what that dark form keeps back from our souls. We pray, and try to meet with faith the grace which is ever going forth.

So there is a holy bond between us and our God: He who blesses and we who are blessed rejoice together. We lift up heart and thought to God; we seek to live in union with Him, having one will with Him, and doing all things in His Name and by His strength. The Almighty, who upholds the worlds in their place, can keep us from falling, and bear us on safely to the end. His loving-kindness is not less than His power; for all in Him is infinite. We meditate upon what He has proved Himself to be, and we press near to Him that we may know more. All our spiritual being is drawn towards Him; He attracts us; He gives us the love with which to long for and to cleave to Him.

Christ tells us how we can abide in His love and go on in living union with Him. As we keep His commandments, life comes from Him wherewith to do His will. Among His commandments are those which bid us seek the means of grace, by which His own life comes to us, enabling us to live for God. We eat His Flesh and drink His Blood, that He may dwell in us and we in Him! For nearer union we must always strive. We must go where Christ leads, with a loving faith that fastens us in faithfulness to Him. In this faith, which ever seeks more grace, His grace upholds us. The right hand of the Most High draws us away from that which keeps us back from God, and guides us where strength of faith and love and hope is gained. The right hand of the Most High is found a firm support to the faith which grasps it even with trembling. It makes glad the love which clings to its consolation. It ever gives to hope a larger, clearer vision of what God will surely do. Who can resist His right hand? Who can take us from His everlasting care?

"Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation."—Ps. lxviii. 19.

WHEN the Lord was about to go to receive the gifts He had won for His own, He lifted up His hands and blessed them. We bless Him now as the God of our salvation, who lives to bless us daily with all good things, and to bring us safely past the dangers of our way. He "loadeth" us, laying a burden upon us; but in doing so He in truth upholds us, bearing our burden for us. What He bids us carry does not break down or wear our strength; it makes us strong and helps us forward.

We have a burden of sin, and are weary with carrying the yoke of a hard master. We have a burden of care, made up of all the gathered fears and sorrows and vexations of life, that presses down body and spirit. The flesh is weak, sinking under it, and the spirit grows weary of the sameness of its trial. Our souls long to find rest. Christ gives it when we come to Him and claim Him as our Saviour. But He only gives it to us when, instead of that under which we groan, we bow to receive His light yoke and easy burden. Laden with that load we are indeed laden with blessings. He makes Himself known as One who loves us, and bids us, loving Him, to bear all for His sake. Bearing it in faith and love and hope, the soul is lightened of its weight of sin, and feels the help and cheer of the great goodness of the Lord. Care loses its power to crush. It is changed into a means of grace, by which the soul is fitted to receive larger, fuller blessing.

So our burden, as it makes claim on our love, sends us to the Source of love for added power of love. The Lord bears our burden by being Himself our strength. This strength comes with His burden. All things are ours, if we are indeed Christ's. If we are His servants we are His care. To save us from other lords He calls on us to serve Him. To ease us of other loads He lays His burden on us. We bless Him for the calling and the power to will and do of His good pleasure, and so to work out the will of the God of our salvation. We bless Him for the burden He gives, and bless Him that He bears it for us. We bless Him that He thus trains us in the ways of grace, till we know His goodness, and our salvation is a finished work.

"He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy. He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence: and precious shall their blood be in His sight."—Ps. lxxii. 13, 14.

THE powers of the world shall acknowledge Him whose kingdom is not of this world. Nations shall worship and obey the supreme Ruler over all. We do not see this yet, but the love and power of Christ work towards it. His loving care for His own, His love that ever reaches out to bring men under His care, wins the world for Him. Defied or forgotten though He be, He has not left His throne. No man sins out of His sight and reach. No plot is laid, however darkly, no violence is done, however suddenly, without His knowledge. The blood of those who count not their lives dear for His sake is counted, drop by drop, and is precious to Him.

If we serve Him as our King, He takes charge of us as His dependents. Though all men forsake us and we have no power to help ourselves, we are not without a helper, if the Lord stand by us. Even the hairs of our head are numbered. He does not always save from the Cross. Often He seems to let our foes have their way, that He may save us from worse foes than those that kill the body. Sometimes He uses man's hate to let His people free to go to be with Him, and to gain for them a better resurrection.

In all needs and dangers that do not threaten harm to the soul we say, "Thy will be done." We are sure what His will is, when our souls want, and we fear lest we die from God. He has learned what temptations are; He knows how much grace we need. Our blindness to our true state pleads with Him for pity and help. He sees the pride and self-trust and dulness of feeling that hinder us. Our prayer may be but as the cry of an infant in pain, yet He helps according to His own knowledge of our need. He blames us not for wanting too much: our wish to gain can never match His wish to give. He saves us by giving Himself to us as He gave Himself for us. Bought by His own life, made alive unto God by His life imparted to us, our lives are dear to Him. He will guard us from the snares that are spread in our path, from false doctrines and the "deceitfulness of sin." He will make us strong to triumph over death.

"*I call to remembrance my song in the night: I commune with mine own heart: and my spirit made diligent search.*"—Ps. lxxvii. 6.

NO outward trials can wholly crush the soul, while God's support is felt. The peace of God can keep heart and mind calm in the midst of strife. There are few states of suffering which are not broken by some relief, if only for a little time. The strain is hard when through the watches of our night of sorrow God keeps us looking in vain for light; when we feel too low and weak to pray, and are tempted to ask if there be indeed One who hears.

But we have more than the present. Thankfulness for the past and hope for good that shall be must come to our help, when there seems nothing to cheer or comfort in what now is. God's covenant stands. His word is pledged. His love seeks the same ends as ever. The years of our earthly life are few. God is from everlasting to everlasting. He deals with us as those who are to live on when time is over, and for whose eternity He cares in His own wise, patient way. It is not for us to trust Him, only while He makes the world bright or gives us light in our hearts, and to lose faith while He trains us by the needful discipline of sorrow. It is hard for His love and tenderness to afflict us, as it is hard for our faith to bear the affliction well. We call to mind our songs. We have sung for gladness of heart, seeing God's goodness in what cheered us, sure that our faith was met by the grace of God. God will give us even greater peace and joy than before, when it is good for us; and we shall prize them more after this time of unrest and grief.

If indeed we make right use of what we pass through now, we shall gain more power of praise; we shall grow in the love which will hold fast to God. In the darkness our sins are felt more keenly, as we seem to be brought near to the Cross of Christ. We are less apt to forget that God's love makes them more shameful, and to feel as if their pardon were an easy thing. Let us search out the deep places of our hearts, and look at all our life's sins, when to our saddened anxious hearts they seem worst. So when the time of song returns, we shall praise with new devotion the love which saves us from such foes and gives us hope of a sinless life for ever.

"*Sing aloud unto God our strength: make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob.*"—Ps. lxxxi. 1.

THE God of Jacob was the glory of His people Israel. They were the seed of him whom God chose, and they claimed rights in God, as the chosen race. He was their strength, by whom they had won all their triumphs. As the seasons came round in turn, they dwelt upon each fact in their nation's history which roused thankfulness and faith and hope. They did well to feel an inward joy which could not but find voice. They met together, each adding to the fulness of the common offering, and stirred by the enthusiasm of the rest.

We know the meaning of God's dealings with His ancient people, and how what they rejoiced in told of a nearness to God and a fulness of blessing reserved for us. We think of God in Christ bringing salvation, becoming the strength of our enfeebled nature, giving us a sure defence against all that might harm us. We think of the holy calling which has given us a part in all the blessings and hopes of the Church of God. Thought and heart are drawn ever towards God, as our God manifested to us in so many ways of love. They are so many that they need to be dwelt upon one by one. So their manifold power upon us is more clearly felt.

As the years go by, each season tells of some triumph of grace, some work of power, some new way in which God has shown His care for His people. We realise our part in the fruit of His workings, as we praise Him. We bind ourselves to live as those for whom such things have been done. In our open acknowledgment of what God is to us we own what we ought to be to Him, and vow ourselves faithful. We rouse others to learn what we know, and to gain experience of what makes us glad. We use all helps to aid our voices to express what we feel and to deepen the feeling within us. New mercies and signs of God's care call ever for new thanksgivings. But however dark or bright our lot may be, God changes not; and when only He remains unshaken, there will seem to be the truest cause for thankful praise that He is our strength and that we can trust Him always. In our songs of joy we prepare for the life of joy, when we shall see God's work finished, and no clouds shall come between us and Him to daunt our faith and make it hard to be glad.

"*All my springs are in thee.*"—Ps. lxxxvii. 7.

SO shall men of all lands own and tell what Christ is in His Church. In the spiritual Jerusalem they shall find the peace of God. With all outward signs of joy they shall praise the Fountain of the waters of life, where weary, dying man is bidden to drink freely. Ezekiel (ch. xlviii.) saw a vision of waters flowing from the house of God over the desert and into the Dead Sea, bringing healing and life and gladness. Isaiah (ch. xii.) spoke of drawing waters with joy out of the wells of salvation. Zion was the city of God, therefore glorious things were spoken of her. Christ is in His Church now, making her all that she is. Our part in the blessings of the Church depends upon our union with Christ. The rivers of living water, promised to each, flow from one Head, as the distributed tongues of the one flame fell on the disciples.

It was God's will in old days to call His people near Him where His special Presence dwelt. There He met with them and sent them forth cheered and strengthened by His blessing. Now God is pleased to bestow His grace through ways and channels of His own appointment. In the human nature of Christ all was stored; through that all goes forth now. And by the means of grace in His Church we can draw nigh, that He may draw nigh to us with His gifts of blessing. The streams overflow indeed, for God's love will not be kept back from its free working by man's slowness and wilfulness and unbelief. But we do well to love the Church, where the wells of salvation are filled for us by the Saviour, and we can draw from Himself what is living and life-giving.

We need ever fresh supplies; and although there be but one Source, we must use all the ways by which we are taught to draw His manifold gifts. So we prove our faith in Him from whom all good comes, and our spiritual life is in all its powers revived and strengthened. There is no grace or blessing which is not provided for us in Christ's Church. There is no good in us; there is no power of doing good for others which does not come from union with Him, the Fountain of all good. How little we as yet enjoy, while our desires are so weak, and we receive through earthly channels! What shall it be when in the City of God above we are nearer to the full Fountain, and know that all His fulness is for us!

"*Because he hath set his love upon Me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known My Name.*"—Ps. xci. 14.

GOD loves men that they may love Him, and He loves those who love Him. He shows His love by making known His Name. God is before us as One to be loved, according as His Name has to our minds its full true meaning. We are able to love God, according as His grace becomes a living power in our hearts, and His Spirit moves our wills to give what conscience owns is due. We may hear the sound of God's Name, we may repeat it, while it awakens no thought or feeling. Only by earnest meditation can we gain any of the knowledge of which God speaks here.

To learn is but to find out how much is still unknown, which attracts with its promise to yet deeper searching. Faith enlarges hope, and hope strengthens faith as it gains by degrees what it reaches after. Love takes help from both faith and hope. When we withdraw from all that might shut us off from God, when we put ourselves where He is made known in His power and grace, seeking to abide in His love, we set our love upon Him. Love is unselfish, yet gains all blessing. There is a reward which is not the wages of a hireling but the blessing of a child. We know God's Name; we act upon our knowledge in a life of holy fear and simple trust and single-minded effort of duty: God lifts us to higher, clearer light; He shows us more of what He is.

We set our love on God, and in that very act of will we find deliverance. He delivers us, loosening one by one every snare in which we might be held, and setting our heart and will at liberty. The promise is of a deliverance to be wrought out now, and realised in full hereafter. Knowledge must grow by attention and by holding communion with Him whom we would know. Love must be kept alive and fed by pressing close with firmly fixed desire and will to Him who loveth us. When we thus call upon Him, seeking Him in Christ who reveals Him in His truth and grace, He answers us. He is with us in all the trouble of our doubts and fears, in all the coldness we deplore, in all the struggles that seem but to prove our weakness. He saves and He will save, till we know Him as our Saviour who sets us on high for ever.

"Clouds and darkness are round about Him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His throne."—Ps. xcvii. 2.

GOD hides Himself from the thoughtless and profane; He is veiled even from His own most loyal ones, lest they draw near to gaze, and so fall into sin. The heedless and inattentive cannot trace His ways in Nature or in the course of the world's history; but what seems strange and unmeaning to dull minds is full of beauty and method to the earnest student. And still there is much left dark and unexplained. The Creator does not take His creatures into His full confidence, so as to satisfy their curiosity and leave no room for faith and lowliness. The King has His state secrets.

It is the same with God's dealings with souls, and all His supernatural work of grace. He is not seen, any more than the souls are on which His Spirit works. The supernatural forces active in the Church are not less mysterious than those the effects of which we watch in the world around us. Clouds and darkness warn where God is, even while they conceal Him. We can trace what He does, though not how or why. His ways are past finding out, because His wisdom is unsearchable by our understanding. We learn enough to make us sure that all is well and safe in His Divine hands, and to silence every bold doubt or faithless misgiving. God's throne is firm, and it is settled in righteousness and judgment. So we can go on calmly, and rejoice in hope that we shall soon see what faith already makes us sure of.

As at Sinai there were not only the thick darkness and the cloud, there were lightnings and voices; so God's words reach us now, and the signs of His ever active power are shown. There goes a fire before Him as He leads His people through this wilderness towards the land of promise. While we are faithful we are safe; our salvation goes on. Foes and temptations are overcome as we pass onward after our Leader. And we are purified by the fire of trial through which He brings us, till His enemies within our souls are consumed. We praise Him whom a cloud received out of the sight of His adoring disciples. We look for Him to come again with clouds. We live so that we may rejoice and lift up our heads when His glory is revealed.

"*He will not always chide: neither will He keep His anger for ever. He hath not dealt with us after our sins.*" Ps. ciii. 9, 10.

GOD reproves those whom He would keep in safe ways. Divine anger shows Divine love. Only when other means fail, or would fail, does His goodness take the form of severity. He loves not to see us grieve, or to seem harsh to those whose happy trust He values. There is no waste of trial. He measures what is enough. Sometimes God warns us of what we have done or have failed to do, rousing us to blame ourselves, lest lasting sin bring on us lasting sorrow. Sometimes He checks in its beginning some coldness or carelessness, or the rising up of some hidden growth of evil. Sometimes He puts us on our guard against temptation which He knows is coming; or He makes us watchful, lest we lose an opportunity that He is about to offer us.

So He is beforehand with our foes, who would flatter us to our ruin and bid us rest on in careless self-content. We are ashamed of doubts, if we think of our sins and of the forbearing gentleness of God. What might have been our lot and our hope, had God claimed His hard rights over us and dealt out to us mere justice! We take for granted all that brightens our way. We hardly trace it to our Maker. We speak of grace and of heaven as if the words meant little, and as if all that they do mean were ours at no cost. On the other hand, the cares and pains of life are traced to God, and each cloud as it passes seems to hide the clearness of heaven. Yet how often is it that we suffer in spite of God, and that God saves us from receiving in full the fruit of our own doings! How much good there is around us, and how wonderfully comfort is mingled with what is darkest!

We would not have the Divine voice silent. Let us hear it, even though its sternness awe us, if we need warning and reproof. We would not be spared chastening, which tells of jealous love, and without which we must forego spiritual gifts of which it is the pledge. We pray not so much to be saved from the suffering, as to be saved from losing what the suffering is meant to bring us. Let God chide away what is evil; we will wait in humble faith and hope, till what seems only anger passes away, leaving the work of His love finished in us. Then there is "for ever" to enjoy His smile.

"*They showed His signs among them, and wonders in the land of Ham.*"—Ps. cv. 27.

MOSES and Aaron were sent by God. They spoke in His Name. His power was put forth by their hands. At such a crisis in the history of man we are prepared to hear that a strange work was marked by strange signs. When God works a miracle for His Church, we feel no wonder that He brings His power to bear freely on Nature, so that it moves in new and startling ways. God set His people free by force. He gave proof that a power was on their side which could guard them safely through the dangers of the desert. So He taught them that, while under His care and obeying His word, they need fear no evil. The plagues of Egypt were, it may be, not of kinds wholly unknown. But they were of a new severity; and each was foretold as a sign that God would have His will done.

God meant mercy in all His works of judgment. His chosen must go to their appointed task for the good of all generations. And this life is not all. It is not much in eternity. Who can tell how many were led to seek light for their souls, while the darkness that could be felt awed them into thoughtfulness? Who can tell how many found to their everlasting good a God whom they were led to feel after while His judgments were abroad? Who can tell how many of the slain firstborn were saved from an endless life of sin by being early snatched away? Who can tell how many hearts they drew after them to the world of the pure?

The Creator still wields the many forces that He has called into being, and can use each one, as He wills, for man's teaching and good, and for the help of His Church. A pestilence that slays its hundreds is needed to warn and to rouse out of carelessness, so that the lives of millions in after generations are healthy and prolonged. Troubles lead to the purifying of the Church, and the removal of what hinders the development of her spiritual life and the free movement of her spiritual energies. And when man's own sin or folly seems to be the sole plain cause of disaster, yet God has all under His control. God's eye reaches into eternity. We thank Him for all signs that we are His people, and that therefore He is our God, in whose hands we may leave all.

"*There He maketh the hungry to dwell, that they may prepare a city of habitation; and sow the fields, and plant vineyards, which may yield fruits of increase.*"—Ps. cvii. 36, 37.

GOD gives man the skill and strength to work, so that the soil may yield him fruit. God sends the light and rain and dew, and blesses what is done. So the wild waste lands are made rich in what men need; and where all once was desert, homes are built by those who in the way of faithful labour wait on God. They who in spiritual things look to God for help and leading have to do with the same God. He shows the way of His will to those who are ready to go forth at His word. Where He causes us to dwell He does not leave us with any want uncared for.

We enjoy the fruit of the toil of those who have been before us, whose labours God has blessed. We have our houses of prayer. We are gathered together as fellow-citizens in an ordered spiritual community. We do not dwell in shifting tents, but in a city built after God's plan, which is a type of that above, with settled laws, and institutions of Divine authority. The truths of Christ and the power of the presence of the living Christ are our portion, that we may be nourished and grow strong for the eternal life. The Church, the "vineyard of the Lord," prospers under the care of the Divine Husbandman. Other men have laboured, and we enjoy what has cost us nothing.

Knowing what it would be to seek Christ without a guide, and to have no settled faith or rule of life taught by Divine authority, how can we thank God as we ought for the great inheritance of good to which we are born! Be it ours to leave yet greater cause for gratitude to those who come after us. We must do our part to make the Church yet more a city, which men may love to dwell in, and be thankful to call their spiritual home. The most fertile fields will become weed-grown and fruitless, unless care and sowing be perseveringly renewed. And fields are to be reclaimed out of what still yields nothing to the Lord. There is work for us in the vineyard round our own doors. To be worthy of God we must rest not till the earth is full of the knowledge of the Lord, and by His grace bears fruit to His glory.

"*The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.*"
Ps. cxii. 6.

RIGHTEOUSNESS is everlasting. All else that man can gain here is left behind when he departs: righteousness is his imperishable outfit for the eternal world. The righteous man is he whom God's love enables to live, loving God and man in deed and in truth. The Psalmist dwells here upon active mercy and benevolence as signs of the character. The righteous sees and owns the claim on him which all those have whom God loves. The love of God in him bids him freely to give of what he has been given. He is merciful, as his Father in heaven is merciful, whose nature he as a son has received and must put forth.

So we may test our part in the hope which belongs only to the righteous. We shrink from the utter loneliness of those who are forgotten. We would have a place in the thoughts of the godly and the loving. Christ is Himself the sum of all divine gifts, and He remembers all that we do and give for His sake. Christ, who cares for His own members by our means, makes sure a blessing for those whom He employs. We know we only do our duty, and that it is our Lord who works in us; but He tells us that He will one day say to those who have been faithful to their holy trust, "Ye did it unto Me."

In the knowledge of God, and in the enjoyment of the grace which comes through Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit, we cannot be selfish. Our possession of these things is shown by our zeal that others may share them with us. We use the things of this world to cheer the way of those around, to make less their temptation to unbelief and wrong-doing, to win them by the love of God to glorify our Father and live themselves as His children. We do our part by effort and prayer to turn many to righteousness. So we hope to be received into everlasting habitations, where we may shine as the stars for ever. What joy to be eternally remembered by God as good and faithful servants whose work is well done! What joy to be with those whose way to joy we have been enabled to help and cheer! What joy to know that God sees in heaven, not only the triumph of His grace in ourselves, but work perfected in others that He has done by our means!

"I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord."
Ps. cxviii. 17.

GOD did not cast off His people. When their life as a nation seemed doomed, they never lost faith in their high mission. They were always sure that God would bring them through trial to greater glory. Christ was not given over to death, when the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and He felt as if God had forsaken Him. He knew that He should rise again and live to make God known.

So it is with His Body the Church. Her life is His life in her, and it is eternal. All she suffers does not touch that life. The malice of her foes carries on the work of God's love. It purifies her that she may live indeed, and may show more plainly God's presence with her. The world is against her, that she may not be spoiled by the friendship of God's foe. Her strength fails, that all may see that no human power saves her. Those who suffered and died for Christ live and speak still.

We have our own place in God's plan, our own work to do. He keeps us in life here, till we have done our part. We live that we may show forth the praise of Him, whose glory is in the triumphs of His holiness and love. Each danger through which we have been brought safely is a call to use more earnestly for God the life which He prolongs. Each trial which has humbled us is meant to give to our life a purer, truer, higher aim.

When we think of the lost state from which God raised us, and the mercy which has saved us often from falling into the death of sin, all the powers we have and all the time left must seem too small an offering. But if we have indeed passed from death unto life in Christ, and live now by the faith of the Son of God, then, though we die, yet shall we live on. Death does not part us from Him in whom we live. All that tries and saddens now warns us to make our union with Him more sure, and helps to bind us more closely to Him. It tells us of His care for us, lest we forget wherein our strength and hope are, and so cleave to things that perish, instead of to Him. Our love is weak now, because our faith is weak, and so our praise falls short. When we have died out of this state of trial and discipline, then we shall live indeed, and declare the works of the Lord.

"I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto Thy testimonies."—Ps. cxix. 59.

WE have often sought light and grace from God. In every prayer we have undertaken to use what we asked God to give. We have come before Him, from time to time, as those who owned their need and weakness, and longed for Him as guide and ruler. We have bound ourselves by solemn vows, renewing the covenant which He made with us when we were baptized into His Church. How far have we made God's way our way? How far have we kept God's word, and ruled our heart and thought and life according to it?

We cannot go on for ever in thoughtlessness. It is well to be thoughtful in time, and to consider our ways, that we may act wisely while we can. Whither do those ways lead? Are they ways of honour and of peace even now? If our life has been lived with a high, true aim, it is not at once that all weakness is overcome. There will be errors and failures, while the ways of God are being learned and the nature is being trained. We test our work by the pattern set us by our Lord; we look at what we are, and think of what we might have grown to be. We try the motives that have guided us, and the faithfulness with which we have used our gifts and opportunities.

Why is all this good and needful? Not alone that we may think rightly of the past and know our state now. We have to do with the present and with the days before us; with faith and with hope, as well as with mourning and self-blame. If we have gone from God in self-chosen ways of sin, His voice within our hearts bids us at once to change our course and begin to go in the path of His will. Where we find that we have strayed even a little from the right and narrow way, we must act with as firm and prompt resolve. To God we must turn, that He may bring us back within reach of His guiding hand, and may give us the grace of which we have found out our need. But as by our own act we have gone wrong, by our own act we must retrace our steps. As from want of thought or from errors in judgment we have been misled, so we must be in earnest and try our best to be right. If our heart be true, and we honestly will to be taught of God and do His will, His light and help will not fail us.

"*Order my steps in Thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me.*"—Ps. cxix. 133.

THERE is mercy in the revelation of God by that Word which makes His truth and His will known. There is mercy in the gift of faith to believe and of will to obey. But we need further mercy. It is not easy always to act under the full influence of the truths of God, and in taking each step, to keep close to the rule of life which we aim to follow. God, who tells us what His good pleasure is and gives the desire to please Him, must also be with us, enabling us with free heart and power to do His will. If our life is to be to the glory of God, we must "do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus," as members of Him, ruled and guided by Him living in us. So we feel the sacredness of our life; so we have strength to act as God's Word shows us that we ought.

If we have indeed sought and found the mercy which forgives, we look for that mercy which will lead us steadily onward in the ways of God. There is evil all around us. To face that is part of our trial. To war with that is part of our training. To overcome that is part of our great calling. We do not shrink from the effort of will and prayer and toil to which God bids us. Without the conflict we should not have the grace given for it, or the triumph to be won by it. There is evil within us, and much of this has gained a place and a hold in our nature through our own fault: we must not murmur or lose heart, but be bold and resolute, striving as we pray and praying as we strive, till we are free. We make peace with no sin, we yield to no sin. We dread most those forms of evil which the customs of the world allow, or which come as angels of light.

Sins of the mind may dethrone God from our natures as really as sins of the flesh. Sin which does not offend our taste or degrade us in the eyes of others may hold us captive, as much as sin which casts us down and tears us. If we would be safe, our faith must meet that grace which cares for our freedom and well-being. The Word of God gives a rule which is plain for those who look up in trust for Divine teaching. He who is the Word of God died to save us from the bondage of corruption, and lives to enable us to enjoy the liberty of the glory of God's children.

"*If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, when men rose up against us: then they had swallowed us up quick.*"—Ps. cxxiv. 2, 3.

THE whole life of the Church has been a fight with death. The fury and strength of her foes is shown in the words which speak of God having saved her from going down alive into the pit, and being overwhelmed and borne away by the rush of deep waters. What was her weak force, that it should stand against the great kingdoms of the world! How was she, unaided, to hold firm to her faith, and be unharmed by the deadly influences of the heathen around! Each time she was saved reminded of the many other times when the Lord's help had been near.

It is well in times of peace to look back to the wars through which peace has been won. It is well to stand on the shore and watch the waves, out of the midst of which we hardly thought to get safely. For that is to count up God's mercies, and to learn how strong and true our Divine helper is. Men thought that the cause of Christ was lost, when the dead body of the Crucified was laid by a few broken-hearted ones in Joseph's tomb. Over and over again, the hope of the boldest has been ready to give way, as one great heathen power after another has seemed to sweep like a flood over the Church. Worse ruin has threatened when she has been tempted to lose faith in God, and to buy off her foes at the cost of truth and righteousness. How has God raised up champions who, almost alone, have faced those who hated Christ, and those who were ready meanly to betray His cause! How have the cunning plots of unbelief been laid bare, and the sinking hearts of the feeble been shamed into firmness!

If our days be days of trouble and doubt, we gain cheer and courage, as we think of yet worse days through which God has brought His Church to a higher state. We learn to pray and fight and to do the work before us, while we thank God for the past, and remember that the same God is with us now. Who must not feel stirred to wondering praise, when he thinks of the way by which he has been led safely to where he is! Whatever peace we have, whatever mastery over sin, whatever quietness of faith, tells of God who has been with us, and who bids us thank and trust Him still.

"*Praise the Lord; for the Lord is good: sing praises unto His Name; for it is pleasant.*"—Ps. cxxxv. 3.

THE praise of God must be, like the love which it expresses, with all the heart and soul and mind and strength. God cares not for songs that are but tunefully uttered words. Nor is it enough to praise Him coldly in well thought of phrase, or to pour out the language of devoted feeling, the meaning of which we have not weighed. We should know whom we praise and why we praise Him. Then our affection shall be roused, and our worship shall be reverent and thoughtful. We cannot indeed see the glory of God, except in signs which teach us as much as we can bear. Only a part of His goodness can be known, and our faith often fails to receive and value it.

There is none good but one; that is God. Men are good so far as their fallen nature is renewed by the grace of God. We praise Him who enables us to rejoice in His goodness, and to receive from Him of His own nature. The command, "Be ye holy, for I am holy," tells us of our adoption in Christ and of the new nature which He wills to impart to us. We praise Him that the manifestation of His glory is the manifestation of His love. We thank Him for all the tokens of His kindness, by which He makes Himself known, and wins us to trust Him for the higher blessings of grace. His "Name is pleasant;" for it brings Him before us as a gracious Lord, always encouraging us to ask of Him great things, and ready to turn our prayer to praise.

While we use and enjoy the powers of life and the good things that brighten our daily path, we thank Him with joyful heart and voice. When we stand in His courts, we remember that He has chosen us in Christ; and that we are heirs of all that His Divine goodness has provided to be the portion of His children. What He is assures us that he will withhold no good thing, if we will let Him keep and bless us as His own in His own way. In times of peace and in times of sorrow He is alike good. We can always praise Him, and even when all seems dark and evil, can find most ground for praise in the thought that He who is over all is good and gracious. When we stand in the courts on high, we shall see Him as He is and praise Him as we ought.

"Surely the righteous shall give thanks unto Thy Name: the upright shall dwell in Thy presence."—Ps. cxl. 13.

WE walk by faith, not by sight. We live as those who belong to a world which our eyes cannot see. We are in the hands of God, and we are glad that it is so. Let Him mould us as He will; let Him lead us where He will. We are taught to "rejoice in the Lord alway," and "in everything to give thanks." If we know the Lord and are known of Him, if we go after Christ with a true heart which we long were truer, we can bless God, even though our way is to the Cross through wrong and shame. God is more to us when He is all we have. If He is making us righteous, that is the one thing needful for time and for eternity.

If men cast us out as evil, and the world has none of its good things for us, we thank God the more that He draws nigh to our souls to save them. If our load be great, we think how great things those must be to which our sufferings are not to be compared, which God, who loves us and makes us love Him, means to give us in His own time. We give thanks for the grace which is ours already, and the peace which we may have in union with Him who has overcome the world. We rejoice in hope of the glory of God, which shall be revealed in us when the discipline of this life is over. What will it be to know that His word, "Be ye holy for I am holy," is fulfilled in us with power, and that we shall abide for ever in the presence of His glory!

Meanwhile it is for us to live the life of which that blessedness is the end and the reward. We own the mercy that spares us, and the goodness that leads us to repentance. We thank God for His grace, by using it as a power by which to become righteous. We thank Him that He warns us, and reminds us of His rights in us. We try to think and feel and act as if we saw Him who sees us. We pray and labour that we may be made pure, while seeing Him by faith and beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord. We dwell in His presence always. We seek Him where He comes to make Himself known to devout souls. So we live under His abiding influence. His favour and blessing are our ground for endless thanksgiving and boundless hope.

"The Lord upholdeth all that fall, and raiseth up all those that be bowed down."—Ps. cxlv. 14.

WE are set in the midst of foes and snares. The path is full of stumblingblocks. We do not grow at once to our full strength of soul and steadiness of faith. We have to learn much by our mistakes, and by the painful warning which they give. But the dangers which we must face tell us how strong we are, even while they remind us of our weakness. It is not God's will that we should sin. He is able to keep us from falling. He can make us withstand in the worst of our evil days, and having done all, to stand upright and unshaken.

If the Psalmist knew of the Divine help waiting in all time of need, we ought to know it better. He who said "Without Me ye can do nothing," teaches us to answer in quiet faith, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." When in some sharp sudden trial we feel our strength give way, underneath are the everlasting arms. The Almighty holds out to us the full power of what He is who hates sin and works to overthrow it. Nay more, we are in Christ and Christ is in us. We can put forth that might by which Christ overcame all that would have tempted or forced Him from His faithfulness. He will help us to lift up the hands that hang down in prayer and work. He will help us to lift up our heart in faith and hope.

God does not forsake us, even when we have fallen and we are bowed with shame, so that both will and power to rise seem lost. If any man sin through frailty or the surprise of some strong temptation, we have an Advocate with the Father, whom the Father's own love has provided for us. He comforts those who are helpless and can find none to give them a friendly hand or a look of kindness. When the world scorns and men cast out, still God is ready to lift up the crushed and stunned soul that will trust itself to His restoring hands. He can heal the palsy of long habit. He can even give back the life which has gone. We need not fall. If we have fallen, we need not stay down where we have fallen. The low in state may be restored; the downcast may be cheered. The holy God is a God whose name is Love, and who is stronger than sin.

"I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for Thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety."—Ps. iv. 8.

THE sleep of the labouring man is sweet. After the work to which God calls us, and for which He gives the will and strength, we shall be at rest. After the fight of faith, in which we follow Christ and bear arms against His foes, we shall enjoy the peace of those who overcome. So we do not faint or lose heart, we do not let our hands hang down in weariness; we press on boldly in the way, that we may reach the end.

There is even now a foretaste of what we hope at last to have in full. Love to God, and the quiet sense of being watched over by unchanging Divine love, make the rough yoke a burden that we can bear. Faith and hope make the long hard trial seem light and but for a moment. Not only is God a strong guard round about, past whom no harm can come; the Divine Christ abides in us, and we in Him. While this is so, and His words abide in us, ruling our life in harmony with His will, we need have no disquiet. We may commend our spirit to His hands, and leave all to Him. The peace of God will keep our heart and mind.

The rest which is already given helps us to look forward to the perfect peace which nothing in us or without us can disturb. When we put off the toil-worn garments of mortality, we shall lay down our load of earthly care; we shall close our eyes to the world's temptings, and our ears to all that might vex or harm; we shall pass beyond the reach of every foe, and be shut in where evil cannot come. At peace with God, at peace in our own nature, we shall have done with wearing toil and the hardship of the stern unceasing war with sin. We shall sleep from this life's noise and glare: we shall wake with new fresh vigour, and know how God has kept us safely for the work that never wearies and the life that never ends. There is rest in being able to commit the keeping of our souls to God in well-doing, calmly sure of His truth, and of His always watchful care. What joy to see Him on whom our faith has found its rest, and to hear the welcome word, "Well done!" Dwelling in the quiet home of our Father, in the safe keeping of the Almighty, we shall be at rest.

"The Lord is in His holy temple, the Lord's throne is in heaven."—Ps. xi. 4.

THIS is a truth in which the faithful find comfort, when wrong and falsehood seem to triumph. The outlook is dark and bewildering, when all that has witnessed for God is treated as a mark for hate and scorn. How can the upright in heart best make a stand for God and for His truth? How can they stem the flood of ungodliness? How can they bear up against open hatred, and the deep-laid plotting by which a wily unbelief would wreck their faith? And the question comes—Does God indeed care? Does He leave the world and the Church to go on by themselves?

But what takes place in the kingdoms of this world makes no change in heaven. God may be disowned or blasphemed on earth; yet His worship ceases not in the temple on high, where His holy ones adore. His laws may be set at nought by those who see Him not in His majesty; but His throne is unshaken: from heaven He looks calmly down on a world which He holds always in His power, and can bring before Him to judgment when He will. He has not ceased to claim man's homage; He does not forego any of His rights over those whom He has made; He does not leave men free to do what they like; His will is not baffled; His laws are still in force. Men think that they have their way, as they did when Christ died; but all the while, even their sin is made to work in bringing God's ends to their fulfilment. A preparation is being made for God's greater glory, and the firmer planting of His kingdom.

So faith can close her ears to the blasphemy, and her eyes to the disorder around. She can listen to the anthems sung before the heavenly altar, and unite with the worship that is ceaselessly offered there. She can behold the firm foundation on which the throne of Divine justice rests, and know that He who sits upon that throne reigns for ever. If in our day the humiliation and the cross are borne anew, let us not be offended in Him who is thus going on to His glory. Let us be only roused to give Him more fully the homage of true hearts and devoted lives; let us own Him now, that He may call us His for ever.

"Concerning the works of men, by the word of Thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer."—Ps. xvii. 4.

FALLEN man does not, by himself, know or seek what is good. He walks by sight, and so he only knows a part, and that not the chief part, of what should guide him. The light that is in him is darkness. He goes wrong; he follows the desires of his flesh and of his mind. He mistakes his own interests; he chooses evil, or fails to choose what is best.

We are apt to grow used to the ways of those among whom we live, and to think that we need aim at nothing higher. There is a steady influence at work upon us, and there is that in our nature which is ready to yield to it. What we see go on in the world of men shows what is in ourselves, who are members of a fallen race. It is our nature to err and stray. Weak and fallen as we are, we think and speak and do evil, unless we are kept back from it. Our wayward wills lead us into sin, if we do not deny self and hold down with firmness the strong blind desires that ask each for its own satisfaction.

God's teaching and God's grace alone can help us. His Word tells us what is right, and how we ought to walk so as to please Him. The life of Christ and His holy character show what man is meant to be, and the life he is called to live. By the same light we see the wrong path, that we may keep our feet from it and beware lest we stumble or turn aside. When we know the Divine will which the love of God speaks to us, we mark how the common lives of men are a trampling under foot of the law which is holy, just, and good. So we are warned to search within ourselves for that which tends towards error and is not willing to obey God's Word.

Grace comes along with truth, that we may use the light well. The Holy Spirit convinces of sin and makes us quick in understanding and feeling; that we may know what is best, and choose and do it. We listen for the voice that says to us, "This is the way, walk ye in it;" and we do not long for the broad and easy path. We are glad of the words which warn us back from the paths of sin along which men go from God. We would work the works of God, not the works of men. We bless God that we can know how. We believe in Christ, whom God has sent; we find Him the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

"Now know I that the Lord saveth His anointed; He will hear him from His holy heaven with the saving strength of His right hand."—Ps. xx. 6.

WE know that the prayer is heard which is according to God's will. While we follow the Anointed One in His war with sin, we know that the Divine power is with us. As members of Christ we pray and strive and toil. For His sake we are heard. We are one with Him in seeking gifts, that He may be one with us in using them.

In the sanctuary on earth He gives us means and ways of meeting Him; we draw near, lifting up our heart to the holy heaven, the Zion which is above. There the Lord dwells; not that He is parted from us, but almighty for us. Thence God hears, that He may help. His right hand reaches down with strength to save; His thoughts are of us; His power is present with us.

Knowing this, we are glad even in time of sorest trial and hardest conflict. It is not that we think or wish; we triumph in the fact which we take for granted and go on from. God has given the kingdom to His Christ, and He will maintain Him in it by His own unchanging will. The sword and spear of Goliath were helpless against David's sling-stone, because David went to battle in the Name of the Lord of hosts. Israel gat not the land in possession by their own sword, nor was it their own arm that saved them. The favour of God gave them victory. The world trusts in its chariots and horses, and thinks of nothing farther: we use the means which God puts within our reach, but trusting only in Him who can bless what means He will to work His ends.

There seem great odds against us. In our weakness we might be tempted to feel no match for the strong force of evil that faces us and follows us. With the sea in front and the Egyptians behind, there is no hope except to faith, which knows how true God is to what He has begun. So we go forward, and the way opens to let us pass, and the way closes to stop our foes. We have dealt with facts when we acted in sure trust in a God whom we know. We have found His strength in us. We have withstood in the evil day, and when those who rose up against us are fallen, we stand.

"*The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him.*"
Ps. xxv. 14.

GOD hides Himself from those who have no heart to do His will. To them He is only a name; His truth is no more than a set of words; His dealings of providence and grace are without aim or order. They do not look beyond the words and the works to the Speaker and the Worker; so the true meaning is hidden from them.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. When we feel the holiness of Him whose eye is never withdrawn from us, and out of whose reach we cannot go, our thoughts are kept turned towards Him. We learn to find out what indeed He is to us. He shows Himself to our earnest faith the God of Love, and wins us from our shrinking. We gain a loving, childlike wish to please Him. We study His truth, that we may know what His will is and how to do it. We watch for the guiding of His hand. We "keep His words," and He comes and "makes His abode with us." Thus there grows up a holy confidence between the soul and God. We hold communion with Him, and know that He draws nigh, showing us how real Divine truths are.

When we are ready to welcome truth, loving it as a light to guide us in the way of God's will, God reveals it to us by His Spirit. What is but dark parable to those who are unready to obey, is made plain to us when we seek, as disciples of the Lord, to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. We can have the comfort of those words of Christ, "Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you; I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you."

As with a right fear we fear God, and with lowly obedient heart ask for light in which to walk before Him, fuller knowledge is given. The deep spiritual meaning of facts and doctrines comes out more and more. Faith traces marks of love and wisdom in the mysterious workings of the Divine will. Again, this growing, deepening knowledge of truth brings the soul into closer nearness to God. His Word and His works tell of Him more plainly, as the spirit gains more power to learn their marvellous inner meaning. So we come to know and love Him with whom we have to do.

"Blessed be the Lord: for He hath showed me His marvellous kindness in a strong city."—Ps. xxxi. 21.

THE psalmist praises God that his prayer has been heard. He has found safety and rest. He has proved God's "marvellous kindness." It is the outgoing of the nature of God, hidden from unbelief, shown ever more plainly to faith. None can find out God, or learn the perfection of what He is whose Name is Love. We do not need to win God to good will. We need to know His kindness, and to welcome the ceaseless going forth of it, and to be kept safely in thankful enjoyment of the good it gives.

Often we are unwatchful and our defences are weak; so that evil comes in, and breaks down our faith and spoils us of our peace in God. Often we are slow to learn, and God's gifts fail to tell of God; we do not understand them as tokens of His kindness. We are blessed, when the eyes of our souls are opened, and our hearts can dwell upon the glories of the Divine love unfolded in ever fresh mystery for our help and hope. We are blessed, as our faith learns to seek and grasp what God holds out to us, and we grow strong in His might, so as to lose none of the cheer it gives.

We wonder that we should be in God's thoughts at all; so little are we and so unworthy, so thoughtless and unthankful! In each sign of care for our wellbeing, in each gift that gladdens our daily path, His kindness is seen. Each warning and deliverance bids us marvel anew at the love that does not tire or fail. How can we bless God enough when, through the power of His indwelling grace, the ways by which sin comes are watched and guarded, so that we are in the safe keeping of the Almighty, whose kindness waits to do us good.

The Church is a strong city, where God's presence walls His people round, and where, in the sure means of grace and in the clear full light of truth, we may enjoy His marvellous loving-kindness. If the defences of the Church seem weakened, and we are tempted to lose thankfulness or courage, yet we know that the Church on earth is one with Jerusalem above. There all dwell without fear of evil, and rejoice not only in the signs of God's loving-kindness, but in what he shows them of Himself.

"*They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of Thy house; and Thou shalt make them drink of the river of Thy pleasures.*"—Ps. xxxvi. 8.

GOD does more than shield from harm. This would not be enough for His love. He bids us to enjoy freely what He has made ready in His Church for those whose hearts are towards Him. We have great wants, untold powers of feeling joy or woe. Here is our greatness. Only He who formed us to need Him can be enough for us, and give our natures rest. None can ask too much of Him who giveth liberally and upbraideth not. Only those who taste and see can know how sweet those good things are which He has prepared. Only they can tell how they lift the soul's taste above earthly things.

The Jewish feasts figured the spiritual plenty given to us now in the Church of Christ. As each high pure longing finds rest, a new thirst for still better things is felt, to be in its turn satisfied with what enlarges the desires yet more. So hope is ever living, and joy ever grows more full. The stream that flowed from Eden, freshening the garden of delights (Gen. ii. 10), figured the river that makes glad the city of God, where God's people walk with Him in peace. Living waters flow from Jerusalem (Zech. xiv. 8). Everything lives where the river cometh (Ezek. xlvii. 9). The fountain of life-giving grace fails not, and the stream brings cheer and blessing in its course. It flows by for our use. It makes this world no wilderness, but a pleasant land.

As the power of enjoying them grows, the pleasures which are from God come in fresh forms and with new power to bless. But how little we know and prize the holy and precious things which Divine love offers, that the Divine life may become strong in us, and that we may be filled with what makes God's children glad! Oh for more faith to find out the deep sources of joy and peace which God's goodness opens for us! So shall we grow fit to take our place with those who eat and drink at the Lord's Table in His kingdom of glory. So shall we be led nearer to Him who is the one source of the pleasures which delight and ennoble. How abundantly satisfied shall we be when it shall be said of us, in a higher meaning than it was said of some of old, "They saw God, and did eat and drink!" (Ex. xxiv. 11.)

"I have not hid Thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared Thy faithfulness and Thy salvation."—Ps. xl. 10.

WE learn to know the God with whom we have to do, and the ways by which He shows what He is to man. His love and truth are sure; for we have traced their going forth, and have had experience of their working. Our knowledge of Him stills all doubt of what we can count upon, as His creatures and His redeemed ones, who are His care. We do indeed hide His righteousness in our hearts as a treasure which it is ruin and death to lose.

But that grace, which is God, and the means by which that grace becomes our salvation, have an aim beyond us. The power is not spent when it has brought us good and made us glad. Nay, it does not indeed bless us, if it fails to do good through us and beyond us. So we hide God's righteousness in our heart, that we may not hide it. We give it a sure, firm place in the centre of our being, out of which are the issues of our life, that all we do and say, as well as all we think and feel, may be under its rule and inspiration. If we have light within us, it will shine so that all may see and be the better of the light. If we have found God true, we shall not be afraid or slow to say so, and to bid others withdraw their trust from what is false and will betray. If we are being saved from sin and are gaining fuller union with the life of God, we will not bear to go alone to the wells of salvation.

If God be indeed our God we cannot be ashamed of Him. He is our glory, or else we know Him not. If His love is in any true way felt, its claim will be owned to be supreme, however we may feel that we respond to it but poorly. If His power to save and to avenge is before us as a fact, all fear of man will pass away before it. If God be to us a living Presence, we shall live as if we knew it.

Christ loved to do the will of God, because He loved God and knew how good the will of God is. He declared God's Name to His brethren. We have what He won for us. He is the fulfilment of all God's promises in old time, and the pledge of faithfulness for ever. He is the Saviour in whom is all we need to raise us out of the reach of sin. He is God's righteousness made ours. He seeks to make each one of us a living proof that God is a faithful God who saves.

"*There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High.*" Ps. xlvi. 4.

THERE was a river in Eden, which watered the garden where God met with man. In the city of God, the heavenly Jerusalem, St. John saw a pure river of water of life, flowing from the throne; and on its banks the tree of life, bearing its manifold fruit and its healing leaves. The tabernacle of God is even now with men. There is a holy place, made holy by the presence of the Holy One. It is marked as the city of God by the way in which God's foes bring their power against it.

The peace of God is her portion and her blessedness. To pass within her shelter from the world's shifting storms is like leaving the restless sea and finding calm between the banks of a quiet river. Men do indeed disturb her peace by strife and debate; but thus they prove that though in her, they are not of her, but still are so far of the world. However beset or hemmed in she may be, her provision never fails. She has all that her citizens can need within her own walls. The river has its source in springs fed from heaven, and out of man's reach to poison or to dry. The streams that flow from it bring health and refreshment freely to all. The grace that comes by Christ is spread abroad in its manifold forms by the Sacraments and other means of grace. In the city of God the abiding presence of the Most High is the source of gladness and salvation. The dry, barren earth of man's nature is made rich and fruitful, as it drinks in the pure water from the springs of life.

How can we thank God enough that He has called us where such good things are! Fellow-citizens with the saints, we have our part in all that makes men saintly, and that gives hope of fitness for a place among the saints in light. Each grace and hope of the Church is our inheritance. There is gladness for us in the help and cheer that our souls gain when we come thirsting to the living waters. There is gladness in the thought of the loving care of which this full and free provision tells. There is gladness in the hope of that holy place where God's redeemed shall serve Him, and the Lamb shall lead unto living fountains of waters.

"Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation; and uphold me with Thy free Spirit."—Ps. li. 12.

THERE is a joy that God gives and no man can take away. Its true worth is felt most when it is the one joy left. It is wealth untold when, bare of all else, the soul must leave earth and go out to a new world. God is our joy,—God made known in Christ, God working His work of love by His Holy Spirit. If we are "receiving the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls," we are sure of all good. If we are led by the Spirit of God, we can have a quiet, full gladness in the assurance of our Father's care.

It is joy to know that God works for us as is best; that He works in us to will and do right, and to grow like Him; that He works by us, using us for His wise and holy ends. It is joy to know that all this is but the pledge and earnest of what He means for us in the life to come. Then we shall see what now we believe in; we shall have what we hope for; we shall be what we are becoming; the whole meaning of salvation shall be made plain; joy shall do for us all that is now done very much by the hard discipline of toil and care.

Joy in God is a duty to God, and it is needful for the health and growth of our souls, as well as for the right doing of the work set before us. If we have lost that joy, we become slaves, not sons, and are in danger of becoming rebels. Even though our feelings may not be stirred, yet we can have this joy surely our own, if we can trust that we are yielding to the God who saves us. If our faith has failed, or sin has cast us down, then we cry to God that His work of salvation may go on so as to be again a growing cause of joy. When we feel the galling of sin's chain, and weary of tasks done in fear; we long for the Spirit of the Lord to lift us up and lead us on in the liberty of the glory of those who are the children of God indeed. That Spirit makes our will firm to do the will of God, and makes the law of God be a law of liberty which guides us how to please ourselves in pleasing God. He is in us the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father; He prays in us the prayer which God's love meets with blessing. So the joy we have leads others to seek for the same Spirit to give them the glad freedom of those who are being saved.

"*I will praise Thee, O Lord, among the people: I will sing unto Thee among the Gentiles.*"—Ps. lvii. 9.

WHEREVER the true God is known, He is praised in the words of David. The Spirit that moved David to feel devotion and to give it form in words, uses those words to stir up the hearts of men everywhere, and to guide their praise. Men are alike: they have like mercies, and they owe a like debt of praise to the same God as of old. In all the changes of our lot, we find words in the Psalms which fit our case, which speak to us, and tell us how to speak what is struggling in our hearts. And often what has seemed to have no clear meaning or worth, becomes at once the help that we need most in some new joy, or care, or sorrow.

The calling of David was a high one. But God gives to all who know His love and truth, a part in making His praise known. We may not hide the light which shines upon our souls and makes us glad. We may not think it enough to make melody in our heart. We must let the voice of our praise be heard, calling others to share our blessings and take part in our songs. We are bound to "do good unto all men, specially unto them that are of the household of faith." The Master's bidding speaks to every disciple. We are sent "into all the world to preach the Gospel to every creature." The good news best wins its way when those who tell it can praise God for the good which it has brought to them.

We begin at Jerusalem. Among those who are called by the name of Christ we rouse the careless and the slumbering with our hearty praises. We light our own hearts at the fire of God's love, that our devotion may kindle a flame of devotion in the cold and formal. We go ourselves, or we help to send those who are more able and fitted for the work, to make known the God whom all who know adore. None can tell how far the influence of the weakest and lowliest may reach. Let love to Him who has no need, go forth in love to those whose needs are like our own, and who have the same God. God who loves us and is loving unto every man, will guide us in the work for which He wills to use us. He will gift us as He sees best. He will bless us in and for what we do. He will accept the praise of our own thankful hearts, and that which we have any share in calling forth from the hearts of others.

"*Every one that sweareth by Him shall glory.*"—Ps. lxiii. 11.

HE who swears by God is the man who ever appeals to Him as One who knows all that goes on and is judge over all. God is true, and is almighty. He knows how far we are true, and He will punish falsehood. When we feel indeed how near God is, and how His eye is always over us, the thought of Him comes into everything. All that we say is said in the hearing of God; all that we do is done before One to whom we dare not be unfaithful. There is an appeal to Him taken for granted in our whole life. We ask Him to bear witness that we are upright in will; and where He sees us fail, to make us true in the inward part. We look not for the judgment of men, who err and who betray; we put ourselves at the bar of God, and there we take our stand.

God has bound himself to us, and we are bound to Him. His great mercy teaches us how to claim the help and good which He has for us. As heirs of the kingdom we are pledged to the faithful use of those blessings which by our baptism we are called to enjoy. Each right and privilege which we claim is a new acknowledgment of what is due from us to God. Above all, when we renew our covenant with Him in the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ, we call on Him to bear witness that our desire is to give our whole selves to be ruled and formed according to His will. We lay ourselves before Him, that He may give us what He knows we need, and make us what our hearts tell us we are not yet.

How comforting to turn from our own sad misgivings and the taunts of men, resting upon the just God who is our Saviour! How helpful to know that God knows all; and to live trusting in Him to set us right where we may be wrong, and to keep us without guile before Him! There may be shame before the world; the cross may be heavy, so that we are tempted to faint and to long for man's good word. There will be often shame before our own upbraiding hearts, when we find how hard it is to go on as those who are responsible to none but God. Yet that shame is a sign of grace, and is a promise of triumph. It tells that we are living under the eye and rule of God. He will be true to the word in which He bids us trust. We shall know even in this life the reward of faithfulness, and He shall be our glory for ever.

"*He that is our God is the God of salvation; and unto God the Lord belong the issues from death.*"—Ps. lxviii. 20.

WE are not our own; and He who made us for Himself is our God. All good powers work as He guides them to be the ministers of His love. No power of evil can do us harm while we are in His keeping. We live on, while He upholds our life; we pass to the untried world, when He calls. He wards off dangers that would shorten our time. He saves us from the busy forces of death, and renews the strength which is ever wasting.

And He watches the first workings of that worse death which means the departing of His own life from the soul. We look to Him as the God of salvation, from whom comes all our hope. He hath "given unto us eternal life." The life that "is in His Son" was made ours when the Holy Spirit joined us to the Saviour. God sent a Saviour, that man might not lose God or be lost to God. He saved us out of a doomed world, when we received the adoption of sons, and were set forward to go with the Church in the wilderness towards the Church's rest. Baptized into the death of Christ we were born to a new life. The gifts of grace are ever brought home to us by the presence and work of the Holy Spirit, the "Giver of life." We have power to mortify that which kills the soul from God, and to live, having Christ, whose life is for ever, living in us.

We shall need God to the end, as the God of salvation. Till sin has wholly died in us, and we are out of reach of its fiery darts, we are not safe. It is not enough to have turned our backs on Egypt; we must be led on till the wilderness is passed and every foe has been left behind. Each day of our pilgrimage is marked by new mercies from Him who saves us. It is not our own skill that finds the narrow path, nor the strength of our own arm that smites down the foes that would draw or drive our souls away from God. The God of salvation gives us Bread from heaven and cheers us with that which makes man's heart glad. He makes the path plain, so that we can always be moving forward, even mounting upon the stumblingblocks meant to overthrow us, and rising by their means. He who has overcome sin and death will save to the end those who come unto God by Him.

"*He shall live, and to Him shall be given of the gold of Sheba: prayer also shall be made for Him continually; and daily shall He be praised.*"—Ps. lxxii. 15.

OUR King is King for ever, reigning over souls that live by Him. Because He lives, the poor, who cry to Him and depend on Him, shall live also. He shall live, not as one who has taken life that He may lay it down, but as One who has taken it again and who dieth no more. To His manger-throne the gold of the East was brought as tribute when He came to win His crown. As His life shall save from death those whose blood is precious in His sight, so the wealth of His realm shall be stored to enrich His poor. The better and higher good of knowledge and of spiritual gifts shall be the portion of those who own His rule and seek His favour.

In all prayer shall be the thought of Him. "At the Name of Jesus every knee shall bow." He is our one hope when we pray. Love to Him and zeal for His cause stir us to lift up our hearts to the throne of grace. We pray through Him. We pray for Him, joining our desires with His. We pray for what He seeks as the aim of His work, thus making ourselves in a true way one with Him. The life and gifts we have from Him bind us and rouse us to holy zeal in work and prayer. We do all for His body's sake, which is the Church. We are earnest that His members, who are one with Himself, may live to His honour, and be made meet to share His glory.

Daily shall He be praised is our hope, our firm resolve. Praised shall He be in the lives of those who live through Him; praised by the lips of those whose hearts overflow with gratitude to Him. Never silent must the voice of worship be: during the day of time while men can work here, till the night comes which calls them from their duty in the Church on earth; during the endless day in the land where there is no night, where none need repose or sleep; for all work is rest, and in the earnestness of worship none ever tire, none grow cold in heart or thought. Praise ever follows true prayer. Prayer indeed is a form of praise, for it speaks of trust and hope. Again, praise is a form of prayer. It gives new love and confidence in asking, while it tells what the heart feels for mercies that have been received.

"And I said, This is my infirmity: but I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High."—Ps. lxxvii. 10.

SO the Psalmist silences the voice of unbelief that tempts him. He thinks of his own weakness, and of what God has shown that He is. When we feel cast off, it may be that it is the world that casts us off, while God draws us more under the shelter of His care. God remembers us for good, when we feel as if crushed under His wrath. If we have displeased Him, and He chastens us, it is for our profit, that we may be made well-pleasing in His sight. He would love us, not only as those who need His grace, but as those who are the better for it. He asks us to trust Him to work our good. Enough for us that He knows best how to do this. God can never cease to be Himself, the God who can do what He will with His own and for His own, and who has never failed.

We have our appointed trial. There is for each a cross, heavy and sharp, but always the right cross for us. Each has a race, hard and rough, which must be run with patience. God marks out the course, at the end of which is our prize, and along which we must go to gain it. The right hand of the Most High, who rules all things always, controls us and all that bears on our good. We suffer that we may be partakers of our Father's holiness, that we may learn more of God and have a larger hope.

In the memory of years past, and in the thought of the eternal years, we find the comfort which the present fails to give. He who spared not His own Son, will not lightly lose or needlessly afflict those for whose good He has cared at such a cost. He whose mercies are so plain in the world of nature will not fail His new creation in the world of grace. If His love does not shrink from bringing us low, this proves more than all else how wise and strong His love is, and how calmly we may leave ourselves in His hands. He will surely delight to make us glad, and lift us up, when He can do it with no loss to us of higher and lasting good. We consider Him who endured. We remember that we have not yet resisted unto blood, and been obedient unto death. We lift up in prayer and in work the hands that hang down. We lift up the feeble knees, pressing on towards light and rest.

"*Thou calledst in trouble, and I delivered thee; I answered thee in the secret place of thunder: I proved thee at the waters of Meribah.*"—Ps. lxxxi. 7.

ALL that God did for His people was quickly forgotten. He ever had to begin anew, as if He were an unknown God. Patiently He reminded them of what ought to have been deeply printed on their hearts for use. Patiently He went on giving fresh proofs of what they should have known well, so as to act upon in their whole lives. So it was with our Lord's disciples. He had to say to them, "Perceive ye not yet, neither understand? have ye your heart yet hardened?"

It is well to meditate upon God's "unspeakable gift," which has in it all, and to count up the mercies with which our lives have been blessed, that when trouble comes we may call on God with trustful hope. God does not act in caprice, but according to His own nature, sure and consistent always. That which shows His active presence often veils it. What awes us with its terror tells us that the Almighty is moving and putting forth His power to help us. Sore trials come, and all seems lost; it is as if we were left to perish, and in the dry desert all our desires were mocked. But God is all the time proving us, asking us how far the past has been in vain or has taught us faith. He means to give us new experience of His faithfulness.

Thus each trial is an opportunity. We may claim the promise of God that is surely given with it, drawing into us that which will remain ours for after use in other ways. We can recall the past, and know with a better knowledge the meaning of God's former dealings with us. We can stir up for use grace given to us in old days, which perhaps we have let lie idle, or put away when the immediate need was over. We have indeed been saved, when the cry of our helplessness was heard by God. We have been set free from the bondage of earthly things and set forward in the way to the Holy Land prepared for God's people. Many a time has God shown His presence and given an answer to our prayers. We need not and we must not murmur, if our pilgrimage be weary; it may have been made long and hard by our own fault. Enough if we are seeking to have hearts right with God, who leads us on to the place where we would be.

"O Lord God of my salvation, I have cried day and night before Thee: O let my prayer enter into Thy presence: incline Thine ear unto my calling."—Ps. lxxxviii. 1, 2.

TILL God is lost all is not lost. Rather, while He remains we have all things. He has saved us by the work of Christ for us. He saves us in Christ now, bringing us on by means of all that happens towards the salvation for which He bids us hope. The salvation of each is His care, and is worked out by itself in God's own best way. So every one can say, "O Lord God of my salvation."

It is not only when the light of heaven cheers even a hard rough way that we trust in God. Towards Him we look even when both heaven and earth seem dark. When our love is coldest, we know that God is one to be loved; His love is still sure, even when we feel forsaken on the cross. When we are as if without faith, we cry to Him to help our unbelief. Our grief and mourning are prayer; for we complain not as those who are alone, but as those who are in God's hands and who look to Him for their salvation. We complain not as those who would rebel, but as those who with sinking strength and failing heart still cling to that Divine will which works for their salvation. To mourn before God is to claim His promise of comfort. Soon faith shall feel its hold firm, and hope shall see God giving cheer and blessing. Soon the persevering prayer shall be changed into glad thanksgiving.

We have not to stay far off, lifting up a feeble cry, which may be vain, like an arrow that falls back having reached no mark. Our prayer, however unworthy, if it be only true, finds its way into the very presence of God. Nay, God draws it to Him, and bends down to welcome it. God gives it a real power. It speaks for us who pray; rather, it brings us where God waits to be gracious. What we think and feel goes to the mind and heart of God, so that there is a true spiritual approach and contact. How sacred is that sorrow which turns the whole being to seek its only rest in leaning on the Divine love! There is indeed a sacramental power in that which leads to so abiding a union with God. Blessed is that discipline of soul which keeps us, while on the cross, ever looking to the Crucified, and makes God more and more our all—the God of our salvation!

"It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto Thy Name, O Most High."—Ps. xcii. 1.

THE Most High does all things well. To Him we owe all the good which we have and hope for. He loves the work of His hands: He keeps faith with those for whose trust He asks. We have signs of His wise care at all times and in all things. In the morning, when the world is bright with hope, the blessings that await us tell of God's loving-kindness. We are glad that we have been guarded through night's many dangers. When evening comes, we adore the faithful God, to whom the darkness and the light are both alike.

A right thought of God's love in caring for our souls helps us to see tokens of the same love in all earthly good. Thus everything tends to draw us near to Him, receiving gifts, and showing forth His praise in the devotion of grateful hearts. As God shows love in giving benefits, we try to show love in giving thanks. The truest praise is in the right use of His gifts, so as to gain from them the highest good. So what we are shows the work of Him who alone can make us what the sons of God should be.

But thoughts and feelings find their natural expression in words of praise. It is good to tell forth in holy song the glory of Him with whom we have to do; whose Name brings before us what He makes Himself known to be. It is due to Him that we own our faith and thankfulness boldly before men. It is well to consecrate to His glory the powers of music, of which He is the author, and to which He has given laws. It is good for us: songs of praise will help to lift up our hearts, lest in earthly happiness we forget Him who gives it as the promise of joys which are for ever.

Songs of praise will cheer us in trial, and set us above the world which we see and the cares which press us down. They will help us to feel the freedom of those who know that they are in God's care. It is good for the world that the Church's songs be clear and loud. So we call men to know and glorify the unseen Lord, who from His throne watches over His people for good, and welcomes the worship which they bring. It is good to pray with our fellow-sinners; it is good also, with all the company of heaven, to anticipate the life which is all praise, and to thank God for His great glory.

"Confounded be all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols: worship Him, all ye gods."—Ps. xcvii. 7.

THERE is none other God but One. What are called gods have being only in the vain minds of men. The images which are supposed to represent them picture nothing that is real. Man cannot be the maker of his God, with his thoughts or with his hands. God is the Maker of man, and man can know Him only by the revelation which God gives of Himself. Man may please himself and give play to his inborn instinct of devotion by serving and worshipping in his own way a creation of his own wilful imagination; but in his time of need he is confounded when his God fails him and his hope proves false. The calf of Samaria cast off those who for it had forsaken the true God. The worshippers of Baal cried in vain "O Baal, hear us!" There is no voice neither any that answers, when the soul's prayer is offered to no living God.

There is danger of idolatry among those who profess a right faith. They may be like the people of old, who worshipped the true God and served idols. They may mind earthly things, and worship the creature to the setting aside of the Creator. They may even make the god of this world their lord, while they seek in the ways of his evil will the ends which he teaches them to set before them. How vain and ruinous is the service of sin! How all its pleasures pass! How dreadful is the awakening of the soul that has been deceived and led away! Men make their boast of wealth, or fame, or the world's favour, in which they put their trust, and from which they seek their good. Surely they find out that none of these can help or bless. These are but means wherewith to serve and worship the true God.

Happy are we if we look up to God alone, and make His will our law, His service the work and pleasure of our life. Happy are we if we can count all things but loss, that we may know Christ, who is the image of the invisible God, by whom God is present with us, and through whom our service is offered. Happy are we if when Christ calls we are ready to leave all and follow Him, glorying in His Cross, putting away from thought and love all that might mar the fulness of the service and the worship which the one true God claims.

"*Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him.*"—Ps. ciii. 13.

A FATHER loves to see his children happy. Though he must thwart their wills at times, he is careful not to fret or discourage them. If there be the wish to do right, he bears with much shortcoming; he makes allowance for weakness and want of skill; he thinks of his own childhood, and cheers with his sympathy when failure disheartens.

God is the source of all the love and gentleness of father and of mother. Whatever in them is wise and firm and kind and forbearing tells of the perfect love with which God cares for His own children. God knows how heavily we are weighted down by sin born in us. He knows all the strength of evil that besets us from the first. We are made to feel more sure of the sympathy of God by what Christ has borne. He remembers how sad the way of suffering was, by which even He who was unweakened by indwelling sin reached His perfection. What God asks is that we have a true wish to own His fatherly right over us. He pities us even when we fail in this, if we feel our failure and try to try less unworthily.

And as He claims that our fear should be shown in word and life, so His pity is more than kind thought about us. If we have wandered, and rise to go to Him whom we have forsaken, He comes to meet us and gives us signs of loving welcome to disarm our misgivings. If we fall, He lifts us up, and bids us take more strength from Him. If our work is so marred and unworthy that we feel only shame as we think of God's eye upon it, yet God mercifully makes allowance that we dare not make for ourselves.

How comforting, when our hearts sink and our utmost power seems utter weakness, to know that God cherishes the work of His own hands! He knows all we know of our difficulties, and sees the right fear of Him that is within us. He has made us His children, and so has undertaken a father's part. So we try to be of good cheer, glad to know of the fatherly tenderness of Him with whom we have to do. We meet it with a childlike confidence. We watch to please God, and to do His will from the heart. We lay all our work and life before Him, with all their faults, sure that in His pity He will pardon and will give grace.

"*He spread out a cloud for a covering; and fire to give light in the night.*"—Ps. cv. 39.

ISRAEL went forth from Egypt, knowing only that God went with them. They did not see God; but the cloud which hid His Presence told them that He was there. Day by day it led them on where the will of God was that they should go. When their foes came after them, the cloud stood between the two hosts. It was darkness to the Egyptians; it gave light to Israel by night. All through their pilgrimage the sun did not burn Israel by day; for the cloud covered them with its shade, so that the scorching desert air was cooled. When the sun set, the bright cloud took its place, so that there was no darkness in the vast camp.

Thus it is that God deals ever with those whom He calls to leave the abodes of sin and to seek the good land. His Church must be led by Him, else she will surely lose the way. He must show His light in times of danger. He must hide her from her foes. He must give shelter, subduing the glare of bright and prosperous times; and gladden the times of gloom with a light that is not of earth. For she is in the wilderness, and has one hope, that she is His and may be sure of His care.

The living God reveals Himself to those who are willing to follow where He leads, making truth more clear and the tokens of His goodness brighter. The same revelation of Himself in Christ is made in judgment to those who assail His truth, and who would drive back His faithful from their worship and obedience. He suits His teaching to our weakness, softening the light of Divine truth so that we may be able to bear it. He lets us gaze towards heaven without being overcome by the dazzling glory. He shows us our earthly path, but does not yet make heaven open to our view by withdrawing the cloud of mystery. He does not leave us in the unsafe enjoyment of unshadowed happiness. And in the night-time of our lives, when one by one those earthly things that make earth bright fade out of view, darkness does not overwhelm us. The love of God, which has been the source of all the power which these things had to cheer us, shines on still. It shines out more clearly, as we need it to bring us on our way to the land where there is no night.

"*He poureth contempt upon princes, and causeth them to wander in the wilderness, where there is no way. Yet setteth He the poor on high from affliction, and maketh him families like a flock.*"—Ps. cvii. 40, 41.

NO one is strong against God. No one is weak who can use the strength of the Almighty. In God's hands all are alike helpless. The great in this world, before whom men bow down, vaunt themselves in vain against Him. Those whom men scorn are lifted at His will to honour. God gave to Israel the strength to overcome stronger nations, and from Him came all their glory. He does not fail His people who trust in Him. That weakness which tempts to lose hope and peace is a call to come for Divine strength.

The powers of the world hate the Church and try to bring her low, oppressing her and hindering her work. God makes the Church, by their means, purer and stronger. Sooner or later He casts them down from their place of pride, visiting them with His judgments, and making plain His Church's triumph. Like Israel in Egypt, the more she is afflicted the more she multiplies and grows. She is most set on high when her foes prepare to celebrate her downfall; for then she casts herself on God, and the stronger power which she puts forth is plainly seen to be not her own. She learns to be poor in spirit, when she is robbed and wronged, and men point scornfully to her low estate. Then she becomes rich in faith, and finds the wealth and power which help her to serve her Lord.

We prove the same true in the case of our own souls. The prince of this world may boast against us; but God brings his schemes to nought. If we resist him, drawing nigh to God for aid, he flees from us. He is driven away to wander through dry places seeking rest; and he cannot return so as to do harm, unless we yield ourselves to be his abode, and supply him with the armour wherewith to hold possession. And those whom he stirs up to molest us need not shake our calm or rouse us to anger. God is too high for insults and wrongs to touch His glory. If in lowly faith we trust Him, and poor in spirit seek to be rich with Him, God will set us out of harm's way. Affliction shall not reach that life which is "hid with Christ in God."

"*He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.*"—Ps. cxii. 7.

HE who has righteousness has it from God. It is eternal, like Him who gives it. If we are true and careful, it is ours for ever, and is the assurance of everlasting life. It grows more strong and perfect, and becomes a more prized possession. The light which God puts within us and before us is a clearer guide, leading us on more surely, and showing us the end more plainly. Our heart is fixed; we mean to go after Christ till we are like Him and are with Him where He is. We must be "in Him, not having our own righteousness, but that which is of God by faith." We must by an ever-active and appropriating faith take into ourselves that grace which forms in us the character of righteousness. We must "abide in Him," following His example, and through His Divine indwelling power purifying ourselves even as He is pure.

We have our aim set before us, and the course marked. We have made up our mind, God working in us to will; we have cast our care for time and for eternity upon God. We trust in Him, as the changing days pass; and we trust in Him for that endless mysterious future where so much that is unknown and unthought of awaits us. We have taken up the cross, knowing something of what a cross is. We have enlisted under Christ's banner, and been armed for war. We have set forth to follow Him, understanding what His way is likely to be. We do not expect the cross to be light, the hosts of evil to be friendly, the narrow way to be smooth and pleasant. We remember that He whom we trust has forewarned us of all that tries us; and our faith is not shaken.

So we are not daunted, though evil spirits tempt to unbelief, and evil men who know not God try to turn us from our straight course, or overthrow our steadfastness. We know Him in whom we have believed. We trust our all to Him, only careful that in that strength which is our confidence we "do good," and so are "righteous even as He is righteous," with the righteousness of God. We "commit the keeping of our souls to Him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator." He has been faithful to us as His creatures, calling us to be His children. He will give us the victory in the end, finishing the work to which His Divine love has pledged itself.

"*Open to me the gates of righteousness: I will go into them, and I will praise the Lord: this gate of the Lord, into which the righteous shall enter.*"—Ps. cxviii. 19, 20.

SO sang those who went up to the Lord's courts, when they drew near the gate of the temple. They sought the Holy One. In the ways of worship which He had ordained they sought the needful power to enable them for a life of righteousness. The answer from within the temple, which seemed to come from God Himself, warned them that God kept that gate, and that through it none but the righteous might dare to pass. Not indeed the "righteous" who think they need no repentance, but those who are drawn to God as the One who can supply their soul's want, and who trust Him in His ways of grace as well as in His words of promise.

There is no full satisfaction now and here for those who have any knowledge of the righteousness which is from God by faith. While with great thankfulness we take the cup of salvation, we call upon the Name of the Lord, who reveals to faith ever fresh store of gifts yet to be made ours. The desire grows, as our gains grow larger. We long to enter where grace waits, not that we may go away with our longing quenched, but that we may return to praise the Lord by seeking more grace more earnestly. We lay before God all of which our conscience tells, that He may find in us no hindrance to that love which works for our righteousness.

God alone is the source of righteousness. He gives that righteousness of will and desire which leads to Him. We enter into His presence through Christ, the Way and the Door. Our first approach is through Him in whom God gives access. In each means of grace, and each effort of faith and love by which we seek for added gifts, it is still through the God-man that God's love helps us. And when we draw near to the holy Presence, it is our part in the righteous One which gives boldness to our faith and hope. Our praises now, like our righteousness, must share the imperfection of our imperfect state. None find Christ a Saviour but those who seek Him as the way to the God who giveth righteousness, and who wish to abide in that sanctifying Presence to which He admits them.

"*I am a companion of all them that fear Thee.*"—Ps. cxix. 63.

TWO cannot walk together except they be agreed. Those who are agreed should walk together. Their agreement should lead to companionship, and this again should help them to agree more perfectly. Those who are one in Christ are one with each other. By one Spirit we are baptized into one Body. We are one Bread and one Body, for we are all partakers of the one Bread. All members have not the same office. We are called each to do his part in the common cause, "with one mind striving together for the faith of the Gospel." They that fear the Lord should speak often one to another, and think upon His Name together.

We cannot go out of the world, refusing all intercourse with the ungodly; nor can we separate ourselves wholly from those who in life deny the Lord whom they profess to know. But we must not make these our chosen companions, lest we lead them to think it a light matter whether God be feared or not, and lest we become likeminded with them. We can indeed judge how far our hearts are right with God, by marking those whom we choose as friends. We will be much with those whose tastes and aims are like our own. If we love God, we will love to be with those who love Him and are under the influences of His love. If we are following Christ, we will not fail to be joined in fellowship with others who are treading in the same footsteps. Those who are to be our companions hereafter will, as a rule, be those who are most congenial to us now. If we indeed believe in God as One to be loved and reverenced, the ways of those who forget or blaspheme Him must be distasteful to us.

We are cheered and helped by seeing what God does for others; and we can help and encourage them. The bright, hopeful spirit of a fellow-pilgrim may inspire us with courage when we are cast down. The careful, watchful, quiet holiness of one who walks closely with God may warn us back to earnestness when we are tempted to wander. And we owe a duty to all whom God is leading on in holy fear, and teaching the way of His will. If we fear Him, we will take heed not to offend His least ones by coldness or want of sympathy; we will support the weak, and show the friendliness of those who have one rule of duty and one hope.

"*Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not Thy law.*"—Ps. cxix. 136.

SO far as we love God, we are zealous that His love should have its way; we try to be one with Him in will and work. So far as we love man, we feel care for his well-being, and do our part in helping it. If we love God's law, knowing it to be what God in wise love gives to lead men safely to their highest good, we must be glad when it is kept and grieve when it is broken. Every sin is a wrong against God's love, and a putting away of grace. It makes the work of Christ fail, and grieves the patient, pleading Holy Spirit. It shows want of faith and gratitude and reverence. And each sin leads to fresh sin, breaking up the peace of God's kingdom and robbing Him of glory.

How dreadful to think of all the evil in the whole world on which God looks down! With what bold defiance are His laws met! With what scorn and indifference are His pleadings and His warnings heard! Christ "wept over" Jerusalem, revealing the mysterious Divine grief of baffled love. "Ye will not come unto Me that ye might have life" were His words of sad appeal to those for whom He had come to die. He spoke from heaven to one whose sin "persecuted" Him. So God lets us know something of what sin is to Him; and surely it is that we may, like the disciples at Gethsemane, be near Him, though we cannot be quite with Him in His feeling. Sin is what it is in the eyes of God, who knows it and to what it leads. So far as we are in sympathy with God, we will look on it as He does, and we will pity those whom it robs of the Divine blessing.

The bodily pain, the cares, the woes which crush men, make the world seem to the thoughtful a great house of mourning. But under all this, and the cause of it, are the dreadful varied sorrows of evil, the sickness of souls, the working of the powers of spiritual death, the degradation and decay of all that God made good. Well may we grieve over all that comes from man's wilful choosing of his own godless way. Well may we grieve when we think of the end towards which beings with so vast powers of feeling joy or grief are surely sinking. But idle grief is no help. Christ wept for souls, and He worked for them and died for them.

"Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers: the snare is broken."—Ps. cxxiv. 7.

THE men who built up the walls of the holy city had to guard against the cunning of foes as well as their open assaults. So it always is. When the powers of evil beset the Church, there is often a deep plot to take from her that which makes her what she is. Open persecutions tend to drive her closer to her Lord. So flattery and falsehood are tried where force has failed. The world would meet the Church half-way. It smiles upon her and gives her wealth and power. The offence of the Cross ceases. The world does not become devout, but the Church grows worldly. She is tempted to deal gently with sin, to hold back truths that the world does not like, and to be liberal with what is not hers but her Lord's. The world's net has caught her. Only God can break those strong cords and set the captive free.

We are always in the midst of snares, which are laid thickly even in the narrow way. Though our wills are firm and true, yet we have to guard against the deceitfulness of sin. The net is not spread in our sight. The wiles of the devil are often hard to find out. We need God's help to know them as well as to escape them. We shrink from the Cross, and we have strong desires for many things that God warns us to refuse. Our pride is slow to bow to the claims God makes upon us for childlike faith. Our sloth makes us unready for hard persevering work and careful watching. But, more than this, we are told that ways of peril may be safely trodden,—that we can go near the edge of the path and look down without falling. Sin wears a refined dress. Unbelief is called freedom of thought, and daring mockery of God takes the name of honest searching after truth. We are tempted to set our heart on earthly good, persuaded that we seek it for the sake of God's cause. We court the friendship of the world, and help the world to forget that it is at enmity with God.

Happy for us if we are not entangled! Happy for us if by the help of God the snare is broken, and though humbled and stunned, we are free! God can and He will lay bare the trap which the bait hides. He is ready to break the net of old habits, whether they have held us roughly and painfully, or so gently that we have not known that we were bound at all.

"*Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did He in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and in all deep places.*"—Ps. cxxxv. 6.

WE trust and rejoice in God, because He is good and because He is great. We praise Him for His love that always wills our good; and we praise Him as the Almighty, whom no power can check in doing what He wills. He made whatever is, and He keeps His own works in His own power. He set the worlds in their order, and put in all things forces which He guides according to fixed laws. All nature moves as He has willed, who could have willed otherwise; and who can, for his own higher ends, bring His will to bear in new ways.

God has willed to make man free to will; so giving him the noble power of doing the Divine will from choice. This dignity cannot of course be without danger, and man does by his wilfulness turn God's goodness from him and dare His power. Be it ours to learn that God is good, and in sure faith to will what He wills. In the heaven above us God reigns, and none dispute His sway. The strong angels do His bidding, and rejoice to bear His gifts to the heirs of salvation. All the workings of grace in the Kingdom of Heaven around us and within us are under His rule, and are the going forth from Him of His love in Jesus Christ. Not a sparrow falls unmarked by our Father, whose care is not a mere kindly interest, but the guiding and guarding of an Almighty hand.

There is no chance in what befalls us in the world. God has foreseen all things till now, and He knows what is to be, and how in the end His will shall be done. The hidden parts of the earth, and all that is there which affects us, are open before Him, and act in their place in His eternal plan. The under-world of spirits is part of the realm of Him who says, "All souls are Mine." What is man, what is aught that threatens us or would tempt us! God is the Lord, and there is none else. He has been pleased to call us into being, and to redeem us, and to send us the grace of His Holy Spirit. The Almighty is our Father, and it is His good pleasure to give us the kingdom. Let us praise Him that He is great.

"Let my prayer be set forth before Thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice."—Ps. cxli. 2.

A LIFE of trust and faithfulness to God is a life of ceaseless prayer. Even when we ask nothing, we can live looking to Him who knows what help we need. Our helplessness without Him, which we feel and own, is in itself a never silent pleading. Our trials are before Him in all their weight and meaning. Wrongs against us are done in His sight. The prayer which our hearts lift up is God's drawing us towards Him for the blessing that He sees we need. Our prayer that our prayers may be heard is no effort to call God's attention, or to win Him over to goodwill; it is a thankful expression of faith and hope; at the same time it is a prayer that we may pray aright.

The incense was burned on the golden altar in the temple, and its smoke was borne past the veil to where the Divine presence dwelt. It represented the devotions of God's people. It mingled with the smoke of the burnt offering, by which they were taught to own the duty of using each power always in God's service. The evening sacrifice was the *mincha*, or meat offering of fine flour, with oil and frankincense and salt. This was joined with the burnt offering, and meant the doing of good to men in acts of loving-kindness for God's sake. We would have our prayers so set forth before God, that He may accept them, and give them a place in the working out of what His wise love wills.

We lift up our hands, not alone in pleading, but in labouring towards the same end which we seek in our words of prayer and in the longing of our hearts. What we do is done in earnest union with Him who upholds us with His own strength, and who gives a right aim to our will and our work. We aim to live so that our whole life may be an offering of praise, a sweet savour rising up to God and welcomed by Him with blessing. We seek that those for whom we deny self may be led to glorify our Father. When we lift up our hands our hope is in Him who ever liveth pleading for us, and in whose Name we speak to God. We love to present what He presents in heaven—even Himself in His own appointed service—and to offer that "sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving" in union with what Christ does.

"*The eyes of all wait upon Thee; and Thou givest them their meat in due season.*"—Ps. cxlv. 15.

GOD who gives life upholds it. All creatures live and move and have their being, not by what they eat and drink and breathe, but by the word of God. He shows them how to gain His gifts through means which He chooses as He wills. He who marks the fall of every little bird is our heavenly Father. He knoweth what things we have need of before we ask. All things are His, and He can create if He will. He who has given life can provide livelihood. He opens other hands and hearts to help us with His gifts of kindness. He hides Himself under the workings of Nature. We wait on Him as we study the ways and powers of things around us, and gather the wealth of good laid up in store. We own that all is from Him, and ask Him to give it to us with His blessing. Thus all we do is a waiting upon God. All we use and enjoy is hallowed as His gift.

So with what keeps our souls in life and health and power. That life is from God. It is His own life breathed into us. And from God comes the meat in due season which keeps us in union with life's source. On God we must wait with eyes of faith and desire, with that hunger of soul which shows that we are living, and which has the promise that we shall be filled with plenteousness. God has opened His hand by giving His Son to take our nature. A new life is ours now, and new means of grace in which all needful nourishment for souls is stored.

All the ministries of love which build us up and brace and cheer are so many ways by which God holds out to us His blessings. The words and acts of others which win us to what is good and draw our hearts towards God, are but manifestations of the Divine love and care. The sacraments of the Gospel are means by which our souls are brought into close oneness with Christ and with the life of the Lifegiver. We wait on God when we come for what He alone can give, in ways of which He alone can teach us. We wait on Him when, trusting in His grace, we strive with sin and seek for growth in holiness. He feeds us with Christ. Provision is made for the perfecting of our powers of using and enjoying the everlasting good prepared for us in heaven.

"*He relieveth the fatherless and widow.*"—Ps. cxlvi. 9.

GOD trusts us much to one another's care. He makes known His love through those to whom He imparts it. He is the one Father from whom comes all that is wise and strong and tender in all human fathers. He is the source of all that a wife finds in her husband to honour and trust and lean upon. When father and husband are gone, God gives ever a new claim on Himself. He calls the fatherless closer to His own care; He says to the widow, "Thy Maker is thy husband." By the law of Moses, part of all the fruit of the land was the right of the fatherless and widow. God teaches us by His apostle that to visit these in their affliction belongs to true religion before God and the Father.

Those who seem left on earth orphaned, as the disciples feared that they would be when Christ ascended, may cast themselves on the Divine care. God comes by His Spirit, and makes them strong in the Lord, supplying all their need. They can speak to Him, though there is no human sympathy within reach. They can look to Him for the teaching and leading and protection which they need in a sin-darkened world. They can know of His continual comings with new gifts of light and grace.

The Church is in a manner widowed now; for the Bridegroom tarries, and the adversary seems at times to have her in his power. But faith knows that her Lord is with her and is jealous in her cause. He makes her state more firm and sure. He enriches her with wealth that is eternal. The trials that she bears are meant to draw her love and faith away from all that might rival Him, and to purify her for the glory that He prepares.

When the light of our Father's presence is darkened over, and we feel as if we had only a God to cry to who has forsaken us, our childlike longing is not in vain. The "Spirit of His Son," which God has given, claims a Father's love, and surely finds it As God is hidden, so are His good gifts; but they are as divine and true as He is. We can commend our spirits patiently into His keeping. When union with God seems lost, and we are as if alone and unhelped, our cry, alike in the day of hope and in the night of fear, is heard by One whose everlasting love is pledged to our souls.

"*In the morning will I direct my prayer unto Thee, and will look up.*"—Ps. v. 3.

HE who watches over us while we sleep, waits to guard and guide us in our waking hours. He asks that our first thoughts turn to Him. He is with us, owned as King and God, while we put before us the work and the needs and the dangers that the day brings. We are calmed and strengthened as we spread them in order before Him, and tell our hopes and cares into His willing ear. What we know not is all plain to Him; what we overlook He sees.

So we trust ourselves to His strong, firm, gentle hands in willing faith. We go forth to our work and to whatever trial may await us, as those who have prayed, and are therefore not alone. We look up, and we try not to look down again, but to live through the day in that state of touch with God which prayer is meant to give. We watch for the grace we have asked, and for all we need which in our ignorance we have not prayed for; we make ready to use it as it comes. We take each blessing and consolation as the gift of Him who heareth prayer, and seek how best to thank Him in the right use of His mercies. We bow to each warning and trial, sure that in some real way God thus proves how wisely He hears for our true and lasting good. We look for wisdom, that all may help to make our joy more safe, and to give us larger ground for thankfulness.

So also in the dark hours of temptation, when gloom comes over the soul, and the light of heaven seems hidden, we wait in patience for the day to break. Our King reigns still; our God is nigh, and will show Himself ere long. We are not out of His sight or His care; though we cannot meet His look, or feel the comfort of His upholding arm. The faith and hope, which enable us to wait in quietness while His consolations are withheld, shall guide our heart's devout and thankful prayer, as we look up to hail the returning light of His countenance.

What a prayer shall be ours when we rise in the fresh vigour of the new life on the Resurrection morning! Then shall we look up with eyes purified so as to behold God; then shall we ask to be guided how to praise God through the everlasting day, with glorified powers, in the work that is rest and joy.

"*The Lord trieth the righteous: but the wicked and him that loveth violence His soul hateth.*"—Ps. xi. 5.

GOD does not count among the wicked those who sin through remaining weakness, and in spite of true wish to please Him. He does not deal with them as He does with those who choose sin and are its willing slaves. Those in Christ who bear fruit, He purgeth; those who waste grace and bear no fruit or wild fruit, He taketh away. He knows all, and He tests them that they may know themselves. He puts all into the fire of trial, which has in it power to make strong and pure, or to harden and consume. What it does in us and for us depends on how far our will seeks to be united with that will which aims at our highest good. What madness to make life's trials only evil, snares which fasten down the soul in sin, judgments warning of wrath that is being treasured up! What madness to let that, which is of course sad, be also a cause of new sin, and spoil the hope of a bright hereafter!

We must be tried; but in each trial we may be sure that One who cares for us and feels with us knows what we can bear, and is at hand to give always the needful help. Divine love weighs out what is laid upon us, and watches to guide all so that no part of God's holy and wise plan may fail. The temptations that beset us are meant to make our souls strong with a firmer and more practised righteousness. The griefs that threaten to make life all dark are meant to open out a clearer, higher view to faith, and to give us a better and more lasting gladness. The sore efforts which make us weary are meant to win for us strength and rest in the Saviour, to whom we come, and who calls us to abide in Him. Though the chastening be grievous, and the flesh feels no joy, yet the pain is but for a season and if need be.

We praise God with thankful hope, while we can trust the care of the Divine Father who seeks our profit. Well for us to be proved, that we may know ourselves, and learn what we have gained and what we need. Happy are we if we feel within us a longing for that righteousness, which is the fruit of the Divine Saviour's work in us, and which is the beginning and the pledge of everlasting peace.

"*Keep me as the apple of an eye; hide me under the shadow of Thy wings.*"—Ps. xvii. 8.

GOD knows how small a thing may hurt or destroy us. He knows what help and defence we need, weak as we are, in the midst of so many and great dangers. Of all the organs of the body the eye is the most precious. Through it we learn and enjoy; truth finds its way to the mind, and the fair things around us please. Through it the soul holds converse with other souls. As the eye is precious, so it is tender. It shrinks from any touch. There is no rest till the least stain that may have fallen on it is removed. Like the care with which we guard our eyes, is the marvellous loving-kindness of Him to whom our safety and our purity are dear.

Christ would have gathered the loved people of God "as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings." The Divine protection and comfort may be ours. Where the wings of God are spread we are safe and in peace. They hide us from all foes; they shelter from storm. We fear not, when we know that the Almighty has put His own strength between us and harm. Christ has come to gather in one the children of God who are scattered abroad. He warns us of danger; He calls us to His shelter. Christ has let fall on Himself what was meant to destroy us. He keeps off what we fear and what we know not of, which is often yet more deadly. The powers of the air watch to find us wandering alone, and the world is full of hidden dangers. We are safe while we keep close to God in all those ways of which His love has told us.

God has proved His care and love for us by all that He has done. Christ has met and borne what threatened us. Shall we not take warning and take heart. We must not risk what is dear to God, or fail to seek the shelter to which He calls. We pray to be kept not only from outward harm, but from all that might spoil our purity. We watch against and shrink from the smallest speck of evil. Aware of our own helplessness and sure of God, we fly to Him for shelter, with a quick instinct, when the shadow of danger falls. If God be thus ready to keep us, we will keep ourselves with all diligence and care, lest we make such loving-kindness vain. We will hide in the hiding-place, glad to know where we can be quiet from fear of evil, and feel the Divine comfort.

"*Thou preventest him with the blessings of goodness.*"
Ps. xxi. 3.

SO the heart of David spoke its glad thankfulness and trust. Good which he never had in his thoughts or hoped to gain was poured out on him by the God who called him from the sheepfolds. And when his prayer rose, he ever found that more than he sought had been waiting.

When Christ came as man to win for men the gifts of Divine love, He was but working out the salvation planned by the Eternal Almighty Love. He was, as man, following, not moving, Divine goodness. He was making a way that the blessings stored for man's enjoyment might reach him and give him joy. He was crowned upon the throne of His glory, because He had been obedient to the Father's will.

When the redeemed, made pure by His blood, are His crown at last, they will show the brightness which Christ received that He might make it theirs. He was Himself the great gift, the Source of all good gifts with which God met the vague heart's longing and the faltering prayer of lost men who knew not what to ask. Before we have a thought of God or know what we are and what we need, God's love has cared for us. He gives life and powers and friends, and much that makes life good and hopeful, before we know Him as the Source of all.

Our natural powers are His gift; no supernatural will or power is of ourselves, or first of our own seeking. All things are ready. Christ has died, and lives that we may live by Him and have the fruit of His death and a share in the power of His risen life. Knowledge of truth and means of grace are given before we ask; and the will and power to pray come from God. He calls us; He pleads with us; He warns us; He follows us. Not only did He in His mercy claim us when we were born in sin and knew not our own helplessness; not only did He make us His children by the power of His Holy Spirit, when, being "baptised into Christ" we "put on Christ;"—He goes after His lost sheep, helpless to return, lifting it in His own Divine strength. He seeks the lost coin that He may bring out in it once more the Divine image. He comes to meet the prodigal when he is yet a long way off, and with no thought beyond the "bread enough" which hirelings have.

"Thy loving-kindness is ever before mine eyes: and I have walked in Thy truth."—Ps. xxvi. 3.

THE loving-kindness of God is sure. He does not cease to be Himself, whose eternal Name is Love, and whose mercies are over all His works. He seeks the good of each one. He makes known His will, that men in the way of faith and obedience may prove how true He is. We are much tempted to forget what He has done, and to be drawn out of the path of those who are true to themselves and God. We turn away the eyes of our souls from that loving-kindness, in which faith finds light that cheers and guides. We search for rest and good, as if God cared not for us and we had no promises on which to count. So in our unbelief we fall from faithfulness; our sin hides God's face; and, losing His favour, we miss what we had to help our faith, and grow more unbelieving. He has been true; but we have not trusted Him. We have not been true in heart and life.

The goodness of God leadeth to repentance, when we feel how God has waited to be gracious, and been kind to us though unthankful and unholy. As we get to see God in His loving-kindness more plainly, we are less tempted to trust our own misleading wills or the false promises of sin. We learn to walk more steadily in the way which God tells us is the safe way of good. From what has been and is we gain power and courage to go on. How great the mercies of the past! How tender and how lavish God has been! What rich store of blessing has been held out to us, which we have failed to make our own! How loving is the kindness which still pleads with us not to receive grace in vain!

Surely nothing ought to blind us to these things or draw off our thoughts from them. Surely in all we do the influence of them should be felt. We will love Him who thus loves us. We will do all for Him who thus cares for us untiringly. We will bear all, in quiet faith, for Him whose love has grudged no costly sacrifice to win our trust. So we take heed lest we go from under the hand ever lifted to pour down blessing, or fail in that trueness of aim which emboldens us to ask God to prove and try us. God's truth, which is our confidence, is also our example. We strive to show ourselves the children of the Most High.

"*O love the Lord, all ye His saints.*"—Ps. xxxi. 23.

WE are able to love God, only because He has first loved us. None but the pure in heart, who seek Him in truth, can see and know God as one to be loved. God's free love gave the new life to us who were born in sin; and began, without our wills, what the same love works in us now to will and do. So far as we are "saints" in more than name and calling, we prove how loving God has shown Himself in giving grace, and how far His love has roused an answering love in us. As love to God is deepened, and is fixed more consciously upon Him, holiness will grow, and God will be more felt to be our joy. To please Him will please us; to live in His favour will make up for the want of all else.

God asks us to love Him with all our heart and soul and mind and strength. We love Him with our heart, when it is the settled aim of our wills to devote ourselves to Him. We love Him with our soul, when we turn our affections to meet the tenderness with which He draws nigh, and are jealous that no fondness for any other object shall make us cold towards Him. We love Him with our mind, when we exercise our intellects upon Divine things, so as to inform our faith and make our devotion more enlightened. We love Him with our strength, when our active powers are put forth under the impulse of a strong will, thoughtfully, and with the earnestness that loving zeal gives. We cannot command our affections, but we can so make God our object as to bring ourselves under the influence of all that can attach them to Him. Often the truest love is that which is the calmest, which proves its strength and worth by deeds, even while there is little show or consciousness of feeling.

We do well to stir up ourselves and one another to learn and know how God is to be loved. He has called us to be saints, and He goes on in His work of grace. He seeks to win us to Himself away from all rivals, finding rest and joy in what He is. How great glory and blessing have we here, that God asks our love and bestows the grace to give it! Here is what makes obedience an easy yoke, and training in holiness the fulfilling of our dearest longing. Here is a strong safeguard against sin, and all that might draw us aside from Him in whose favour is our life.

"With Thee is the fountain of life: in Thy light shall we see light."—Ps. xxxvi. 9.

IN God we live and move and have our being. As creatures, and as thinking creatures, and as new creatures, we are quickened from God. "Not by bread alone," but by His word giving power to means, our natural and supernatural life begin and go on. As members of Christ, we have part in His eternity. Because He lives we live: for His life and ours are made one, as the spring and what flows from it. We live, indeed, so far as we are quickened, not only in that part of us which we have in common with lower beings, but in that which belongs to man, and to redeemed man.

Life comes first, and then light. Only the living can see. He who is the Life is the Light of men. As the sun by its own light reveals itself and all on which it shines, so God cannot be seen except by the light which He gives—that light by which we learn the truth of things around us and within us. Alive unto God, aware of our kindred with Him, ruling our outward and inward life by His will, we walk in the light. If we do the truth (S. John iii. 10), honestly using the knowledge and gifts we have, we can come to the light for more and clearer light. The light in us may be darkness, if we trust to mere human guides, or to our own fancies and desires. We may wilfully choose a dim lamp lit on earth, not liking that Heaven's truth-telling sunshine should make plain what our deeds are, and show us the one narrow path in which we ought to walk so as to please God.

God gives knowledge and enlightens the conscience. As we grow pure in heart we see God, and see things as He sees them. Spiritual quick-sightedness and spiritual joy gain strength together. As we draw closer to Him in that purity which makes us like Him, His light of truth and grace is clearer around us and makes us more glad. It shines on our darkness; it enables us to shine as lights in the world. As yet we have only the dawning, the promise of the day. For we are still on earth, in our mortal state, and clouds veil heaven; and we see truth as in a mirror, shown in forms which teach us truly, but do not teach us all. We learn to look forward to the time when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, and we shall know as we are known.

"*Let all those that seek Thee rejoice and be glad in Thee.*"
Ps. xl. 16.

SO Christ prayed when, as man, He sought the face and the help of God. So He now pleads for those who are led by Him towards the rest and joy which God gives to those who find Him. By sin we lost God: going far from Him, we lost more and more the good that comes to those who prepare their hearts to welcome His gifts and to enjoy His love. Though we have stopped in our straying, and turned back, God is still but dimly known and partly reached.

Loss of earthly good makes us feel our need of God. The world's broken promises force the disappointed to ask for the One who is true. We learn the awful meaning of the darkness in which God gives no sign, when the cross holds the soul away from other consolations. We turn towards the one Friend, when we have found out how weak we are to resist those who are against our souls.

Even when a great way off, in the want and sorrow of our sin, there is joy in the truth that there is One whom we can seek and find. Though He only has found us, and we have not yet found Him; we can rejoice in God. Even the weak beginnings of will and power to seek Him, and the word which tells us how His love has ever sought us, are ground for joy. As we seek and find, we have new meaning in our praise. After our utmost seeking we can never find out all that God is or that His loving-kindness has to bestow. His salvation is loved not only for what is already known and won, but for what is still in store for those who seek God. Its glories are ever being unfolded; its blessings are ever being poured out. To all eternity it shall be so.

We love His salvation more as it becomes our salvation, as we are saved by Him and become more godly, higher in our nature and nobler in our aims. We love it, because it saves us from what hinders us from seeking and baffles us in finding God. We seek not only what He gives to us and does for us: we seek Him, the unfailing source of every good. We rejoice with heartfelt joy, and we show gladness in word and life, as we draw nearer to God through the ways of salvation, by which the Saviour reveals God and unites our life with His.

"God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early."—Ps. xlvi. 5.

GOD is everywhere, but not everywhere in the same ways and for the same ends. He draws nigh to some; from some He turns away. He is near to judge or to save. He has His own means, by which He makes His grace known and His power felt. None can go out of His reach, or be where He is not; but there is holy ground where man must tread carefully and with bowed soul, as if He saw God, the signs of whose presence are shown. In Eden God came so that Adam knew when and where to look for Him. The tree of life in the midst of the garden bore fruit in which a special Divine power lived. God was on Mount Sinai as He was not in the plain below. In the Holy of holies God's glory shone, and man could draw most near.

God in Christ was with us after a new manner, as one moving to and fro on earth. We do not see the Man who is God, or hear His voice. But He has said, "I am with you all the days;" "I will not leave you orphans, I will come unto you." He has kept His word. The Spirit came, and in a way more full of blessing, Christ is in His Church. He came to be the centre, from which the Church grows as souls are added to Him in sacramental union. He gives His Flesh and Blood in holy mystery, that we may abide in Him and He in us. He is in the Church as He is not in the world. No scheme of the most cunning, no assault of the strongest, can shake the dwelling-place of God. What evil angels and men plot must fail, if God is in the midst of her.

To us she may seem weak, and it may be hard to our faith to hear the world's laugh of scorn. The power that she has may seem to us to be slow in rising up to meet what threatens. Christ may seem to pass by, caring not for those whose hope is in God. But the Church's one care is that He is in the midst of her; that to Him she brings her faith and love and worship; that on Him she fixes her hope; that she does His will, drawing from Him her strength. Then all is well. Our foes are His foes, who strike at Him when they aim at us. We will bear on for His sake, sure that He for His Name's sake and for our sake will in His own good time make His voice heard and His power felt.

"*The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.*"—Ps. li. 17.

WHEN our sin is brought home to us, and our awakened conscience feels its meaning, we long to make amends. How shall we regain the place that we have lost? What shall we do, what shall we give, at what cost can we win back and enjoy God's favour? The sacrifices which God's people brought in old time were not worthless. God claimed them as proofs of faith and obedience; they were means by which the true in heart kept their part and right in the blessings and hopes of God's Church. God welcomed them, because of the obedient spirit of the offerers, and because of that one Sacrifice to which their faith looked forward. There was indeed nothing provided in the law to meet such a case as David's. Where such sin as his was done, the sinner would do all and bear and offer all; yet still he must feel and own that with nothing in his hands he could only plead for mercy.

What is all that we can do and give? Though we part with what is dearest, though we toil, giving ourselves to God's work with the closest self-denial, this does not undo the past, or replace us in our lost state of blessing. This we feel bound to; but not on this do we rest our hope, save so far as it tells of a true repentance, and a trust in the one Sacrifice. The proud hard heart turns from God, and will not obey His law. That pride God brings low, that hardness God crushes; there is sorrow and shame. The spirit bows itself before God. A new sorrow comes and a new shame in the presence of God's power and love. His right over us is owned. We wait humbly for Him to lift us up, to fit us for His service and use us in it.

The mercy that we find waiting moves us to an abiding love, as the knowledge of how much we are forgiven deepens. The Cross crushes all self-trust, all hope that we can win peace by aught that we can do. So are we in the right mood to lay hold on the hope of which that Cross is the sign. We plead the one Sacrifice once offered. In union with Him in whom the Father is well pleased, we present ourselves, our souls and bodies. We are accepted in the Beloved, and all we do and suffer for Him is accepted for His sake.

"*They go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.*"
Ps. lviii. 3.

IF we would rightly prize our salvation, we must not forget from what shame and ruin we are being saved. If we would know what grace does, we must know something of the hold which sin has on man. The deadliness of a sickness tests the love and skill to which it yields. The strength and the hate of a foe make our triumph a greater joy, and call for deeper thankfulness to the friend who saves us.

In man's very heart sin has its place from the first. As soon as the will begins to act, there are untrue, wrong movements of the life. Out of the heart come the words and the deeds which prove men evil. They are willing to be led astray and ready to be false to themselves. They hide the truth from their eyes; they harden themselves in wrong-doing. Habits of sin grow to be settled parts of the character; the will and power to do right weaken. Warnings and calls and pleadings fall on the ears alike in vain; for the soul that has long refused to listen, at last cannot hear. Like a serpent, the soul rises not above earth and earthly things. The sentence "Dust shalt thou eat" is fulfilled in the lowered tastes and desires which seek satisfaction in what is low. And a soul, in which death is, spreads death. The venom passes into the life of other souls. Such is the downward course of souls that take their own way, and are without the saving grace of God. What is the inward state of a soul dead in sin, only God can see. What is the ruin into which a lost soul falls at last, no man in this world can know.

The judgments which track the wicked on earth, and the dreadful end of sin of which these are forewarnings, tell us to thank Him by whose grace alone we stand; they rouse us also to take heed lest we fall. The same evil is in our nature, the same danger of shame and hardness and ruin threatens us. So we "wash our footsteps in the blood of the ungodly." We take earnest heed lest we go after what stains, or touch the unclean thing. Warned by what we see of sin's work and of the judgments of a rejected God, we praise Him by whose grace we are drawn towards what is good. We praise with our lips and in true lives Him who leads in safe paths for His Name's sake.

"*Hear my voice, O God, in my prayer: preserve my life from fear of the enemy.*"—Ps. lxiv. 1.

WE pray in union with our Lord, whom the Father heareth always. We lay before God all our need, calling on Him in faith as One who knows our enemies and knows us. The prayer of our heart is heard before it finds voice. He sees the force of each coming trial before we feel or dread it. The Godhead in Christ upheld His manhood, so that, though pressed with sorest agony, it could not fall. And in Christ, who is God, we can feel that we are hidden safely even in the most dread time of our passion. That life cannot be lost which is hid in Christ with God.

We would not dare to resist the will of God, when He brings us on to the kingdom of heaven through much tribulation. Taught our weakness, we do not court trial; sure of help always at hand, we need not shrink from it. We do not like it; for it gives us pain, and often is a hard temptation, clouding our trust in God's love. We try to meet it bravely, and to make it a means to greater firmness of soul and truer peace. We pray for faith and holy courage not to fear the worst that may threaten, but to go steadfastly on in the strength of the God of our salvation. There are deep schemes to spoil us of our joy and hope in God. But God is not taken unawares; He is not overcome. He watches to save us in the hour of need. His arrows strike from afar the spiritual foes that are armed against us.

Our life, which is God's gift, is in His care. The voice of our cry makes known the need which He has taught us to feel, and which He is watching to relieve. When we draw nigh to Him, He hides us from harm by hiding the temptation of sin which would lead us astray. We see only Him; or in His presence the attractions of sin seem small, and the perils of it and the shame of it are shown to be real and great. The voice of the tempter is not listened to, while the voice of God is heard saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it." The voice that would lead us to doubt God and to despair speaks in vain, while God gives us His words of encouragement and bids us to rejoice in Him. We are hidden from the influence of evil example, while our life is a life of prayer, and while we strive to follow where Christ leads.

"*Thy God hath commanded thy strength: strengthen, O God, that which Thou hast wrought for us.*"—Ps. lxviii. 28.

WHEN the ark of God was set in its place, the tribes of Israel joined in the triumphal procession. God's people sang together, rejoicing in their strength and giving the glory of it all to Him in whom their great strength lay. They came before God, praising Him for past mercies which made them what they were, and praying Him that His presence might be their strength always. So should He win the world to own His rule, and before His throne at Jerusalem the homage of the nations should be laid.

All the power of the Church is what her Lord bestows. He trusts her with His gifts, that His will may be done and His glory made known by her means. Her solemn worship, her praise and sacrifice, her witness for truth and holiness, what is it all but the putting forth of the strength which God's presence in her gives? And while she owns with thankfulness her sacred trust, she prays for renewal of will and power, that she may firmly uphold the rights of God as King of kings. We rejoice while by faith we see our Lord enthroned on high, and know that He is there that He may be spiritually present with us here. When we were "without strength Christ died for the ungodly." Because He lives He works in us that we may work with Him. Faithful is He that hath called us. Our prayer must be with praise that He is able and willing to finish what He has begun. He will "make perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle" us in His own good way and time.

We want to make the foundation safe by building well upon it. We want to gain a better hold on what we have, and to be able with a higher confidence to bid men honour God. When His cause seems lost, and all that has been done seems about to fall in ruins, then man learns how God cares for His work. He chooses the weak things of the world, that the glory of what He has wrought may not be given to another. He strengthens us in ways often not such as we would choose or think the best. He bids us draw nigh in means of grace which seem to have no promise in them, but through which He draws nigh to strengthen and refresh the life which He has given.

"*There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon: and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth.*"—Ps. lxxii. 16.

A PICTURE of a happy land! In the realm of the King who reigns in righteousness there shall be no want; there shall be no drought or barren land, and plenty shall be enjoyed in peace. On the high mountain-tops there shall be fertile stretches of corn ground. The fruit shall be seen from far, as if the cedars of Lebanon waved in the wind. And those who obey the King shall spread and multiply, making His kingdom firm, and proving the power of the blessing which His favour gives.

All is a plain promise of the spiritual kingdom of Christ. In the City of God, the Church wherein Christ dwells and reigns, we are under His special rule and care. Fellow-citizens with the saints, we are given what we need to make us saintly. The dew and showers of blessing from on high quicken spiritual life, so that all may flourish like a field of God. God feeds us from the Corn, that has fallen into the ground and has died, and has risen fruitful in all the wealth of grace that souls need for life and growth and strength. There is no place or state which God will not make to bear rich fruit of blessing to those who are the true subjects of His kingdom. Where it might seem that we must starve, faith can find ripe provision of what God has sown that we may feed upon the bread from heaven.

All flesh is as grass, and those who flourish in the City of God below can do so only for a time. Yet the loving-kindness and mercy of God are for ever the portion of those who fear Him. In the city above no life fades; even the outward man is incorruptible. What God makes us and gives us here leads on our thoughts in hope and longing to the land of promise. How blessed the citizens, who shall flourish under the King's eye, in the very sunshine of His presence and His favour! No infirmity to check their growth to perfection under the unclouded influence of His loving rule! How rich the harvest to be gathered from those mountains of glory which stand round about the heavenly Jerusalem, where Christ's people have their home for ever!

"Thou hast declared Thy strength among the people: Thou hast with Thine arm redeemed Thy people."—Ps. lxxvii. 14, 15.

THE Jews knew that Jehovah was their God. He had made them His own, and all their story proved how vain was all the power that withstood Him: the wonders wrought in Egypt and in the wilderness proved that Almighty strength guarded Israel. So when lowest and weakest they could not lose hope. Their glory and power were in Him who had set them free to enjoy His blessings and show forth His praise. He was God still, and His arm was not shortened. Still they could draw near as His people, pleading what He had done and promised.

What God did for Israel was but a type of what He has done for us. Christ has come among us, "the power of God and the wisdom of God." He is the Almighty arm of God, that has reached down to redeem us from the bondage of sin and of things that pass away. God has made us His people, that He might save us out of sin's bondage, and give us the liberty of the glory of His children. God marked the Church as His own by the way in which He led it forth from its weak and lowly state, and broke down all that stood up against it, till it became the mightiest power on earth. His arm redeemed His people, and in their weakness His strength was made perfect. And He is still their covenant-God. Though all paths of escape seem closed, He will open a way for them to go forward, and will make what threatens ruin a means of safety from their foes. Though led out where all they need fails and they seem left alone, the resources of Heaven are in the hands of Him who has passed His word to go with them.

We must not doubt for the Church or for ourselves. God is a faithful Creator, and He has given us new rights in Him and claims upon Him by redeeming us to be His own. We do not fear the world, for we have seen what God can do. When our own strength is plainly proved to be weakness we have best cause to say, "It is the Lord's doing." In times of hardest temptation, fainting in the midst of foes, we can commit the keeping of our souls to the Redeemer, who has done so great things for us already. He who bought us at so great a cost does not wish His work to fail; He cares for the least of His redeemed.

"I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt: open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it." Ps. lxxxi. 10.

WHEN God made Israel His people, He undertook to be a God to them in all the full meaning of the name. He bade them rest their faith and hope on Him who called them because He loved them, and who sought to win them to love Him. They had left Egypt, going forth at God's word into the desert, where there was nothing to replace the plenty with which Egypt fed her slaves. God bound Himself to provide all that man could need, and all that the love of God could will to give.

But Israel would not have God as their one source of good. In vain did God remind them of the past, and repeat His promises. They thought lightly of all, and went after other gods. It is hard for God to be doubted, to have to "testify" to His creatures and plead with them to hearken. It is hard for Him to have to reason against the rivals that win His creatures' faith from Him. It is hard to see those whom He longs to bless refusing good things ready for them.

How hard it is that He must send messengers, who in Christ's stead pray us to be reconciled, to put away our distrust, and to receive not the grace of God in vain! He pleads with us that He who spared not His own Son, but gave Him up to set us free as His children, is willing to give us all things. We have not, because we ask not. We ask not, because we doubt Him when He tells of His goodness and of the worth of His gifts.

Our Christian name binds us to be true to the jealous God, and true to ourselves whose God He is. He begs us to ask, to go on asking, to put in largest claims. He gives not only His benefits, but Himself to be the source in us of all good, of all that man's pure desires can seek to have and to enjoy. Man is made by God to need the one true God; and nothing less, nothing else can meet those God-given wants that are in him. To "open the mouth" is to prepare the will to receive God's manifold gifts and graces, so as to make them one's own for use. God it is who enables to will as well as to do; but we must yield ourselves to work with the active moving inspiration that comes from Him.

"*Lord, why castest Thou off my soul? why hidest Thou Thy face from me?*"—Ps. lxxxviii. 14.

GOD casts off no soul that clings to Him: He never turns away from those who seek His face. He watches the way of those who are farthest from Him, and looks after them in pity. But God's love and care are shown in many ways, and are not at all times felt to be the same. The soul of Christ was sorrowful even unto death. The darkness round the Cross told of that which came between Him and His Father's face, when He cried to Him, "Why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

There are times when life seems failing in the Church of Christ and her prayers seem unheard. And few who cry to the God of their salvation are without that experience which makes the mournful words of this psalm fit to express what they feel. But the soul that is indeed cast off has no longing to be restored. It may indeed lament the loss of some of God's gifts, but does not miss Himself; it has no desire to seek His face and to be guided by His eye. So there is comfort in the sorrow of loneliness: there is the assurance of blessing to that mourning and that thirst. The question, Why castest Thou off my soul? changes to one of self-examination as to what in us may be the cause of God's dealings with us. Have we cast off in any way the guiding hand, so as to lose its comfort? Have we turned our face towards evil, or failed to look to God in prayer, and so been left in the darkness we have chosen? The sins of those whom He made one with Himself came between Christ and the light of His Father's countenance. Our own sins hide His face from us.

It is well for us to feel the darkness, that we may put away what clouds our joy and hope in the God whom we strive to love. Though we can find no reason in ourselves, God who knows all things may see some secret fault; we must pray Him to cleanse us from it and remove the cloud, that Heaven may shine down on us once more. Again, our trial may be meant to deal mainly not with faults which need to be corrected, but with graces which God would give us. We must not waste in idle mourning time which God claims for earnest prayer and work, that His ends of grace for us may be fulfilled. He knows why we are comforted and why we are brought low. If we are but humble and true we shall in time know why.

"O Lord, how great are Thy works! and Thy thoughts are very deep. A brutish man knoweth not; neither doth a fool understand this."—Ps. xcii. 5, 6.

THE world of Nature is full of varied interest. It charms as a fair picture in its many forms of beauty and grandeur. It gives endless reward to those who explore its workings. But to look on Nature with the trained attentive eye of the man of taste or man of science is not enough: that may be to do homage to God's works so that they hide Him of whom they ought to tell. The powers we have of enjoying what God has made should teach of something that answers to it in the Maker's mind. The influence of the Creator should reach us through His works. As we learn we find out more how mysterious is the beauty which we see, and how little the wisest can know of the forces that act together in the world of which we are a part.

It is the same with all that makes up the history of men and nations. What seems to come to pass by chance, or by the mere will of man, is known by faith to be under God's control. Time proves how He ever overrules all things, with wisdom that overlooks nothing and power that works surely to its end. Even sin and folly are mastered so as to serve the cause of right. What looks like hopeless confusion is orderly movement to the eye of Him who sees the end from the beginning, and makes even man's wilfulness to work out His will.

How great are God's works, and how deep His thoughts in His world of grace! We adore Him as we trace the ways by which He made ready for Christ. We own the wisdom and might made known in the manger and the Cross, and in the lowly life of wondrous doing good. We rejoice in the grace working vast ends by weak means, and making all things serve God. We rejoice to know that God's scheme of good must in the end triumph over evil. Faith is sure of God, who knows what is beyond our knowledge. We would not be as those who lower their nature among earthly things, and have dulled or lost their powers of knowing God. We would not be unwise like those who think they ought to understand all the deep thoughts of Him, who made their minds, and who would train them in His own hidden ways to higher knowledge of Him and of His truth.

"*Ye that love the Lord, hate evil.*"—Ps. xcvii. 10.

IF we are right and true to God, then we will live aright and truly. We may act in an outwardly blameless way, from many motives which are not the highest, and which fail to satisfy Him who searcheth the heart. Fear of the loss that evil brings now and hereafter is a strong restraining power. It is useful; but it does not prove any love for what is good because it is good. What we love and hate shows our character, and what we are growing to be. That which we love draws us ever to it. We shrink from what we hate. God claims our love, thus enabling us to love Him by the power of the love with which He has first loved us. Christ shows God to us; Christ in us is the hope of the glory which belongs to those who see Him as He is.

Perhaps we fail to find an emotion of love to God such as we feel is God's due. But while we are here that must be imperfect: it grows by holding communion with God in those ways of which He tells. The desire to love Him proves the power of the drawing of His love in us; so does the love of those means of grace which strengthen love, and those works which show it and are the practice of it. If we love Him with the love which He accepts, we set our wills to please Him, we are one with Him in judging and condemning what is evil. True, there is often a clinging to things which are sinful, and a slowness to follow after what is good. But there may be an honest shrinking in the soul from what the fallen nature desires, a dread of it which is more painful because of the longing that shames.

God's claim is to the first place, and that evil thing which would rival and dethrone Him must be hated. The more tempting it is, the more danger we are in of being parted by it from the God whom we love, and from all the good which comes from His love to us. The evil one is our great foe. The evil in the world around hinders the Divine love and robs man of God's blessing. The evil within us is a grief to our Father, who hates it, and whose love seeks our good. As our love to the Lord must be active, so must our hate of evil. Our love is proved by the earnestness with which we take part with Christ against evil, that we may be free to cleave to that which is good and to Him who is alone good.

"*But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him, and His righteousness unto children's children; to such as keep His covenant, and to those that remember His commandments to do them.*" Ps. ciii. 17, 18.

MEN come and go, and leave no trace behind. Even though their works live on, they are no more than a name; and after a little while none would know them, could they visit the old scenes. The familiar truth is sad, till life's toil and griefs have tired the heart; for there is much around that gains a strong hold on us, and few like to be forgotten. Great faith is needed to give a thoughtful hope of things not seen. Dying as we are, we can be so one with the undying God that we share in His eternity.

God gave us life; and He has made that life passing, that we may not live for ever in a fallen state. He has given us a new life by our union with Him in Christ. So He has bound Himself to us as a faithful Creator and Redeemer, giving us the claim of children upon a father. He asks us to fear Him, and so be free from the dread of death. He shows us how to claim and keep our rights in Him. He makes known His will, that so our wills may guide us safely.

We fear Him as a God of mercy, of whose loving-kindness we stand in sore need, in whose hands we are safe, from whom it would be death to part. We meditate on the great love which tells us that, as God is true, we must not dare to doubt those promises, which only begin to be kept in this passing life. That hope, which we have as sons and heirs of God, makes us careful to purify ourselves, so as to be in all things true. God will keep His word with us, and we wait for His goodness in the ways of thoughtful obedience to His commandments. He remembers us for good, and we keep in mind those laws that tell of His abiding care for our well-doing and well-being. Each commandment is a promise of grace, which enables us and rewards us. His mercy makes known His will, and works in us to will and to do it. We are weak now, in our dying state, and all our doing is imperfect; even our willing falls mournfully short. In the endless ages of the life to come we shall know God better and be like Him in will. He will hold firm to what He has promised.

"*The people asked, and He brought quails, and satisfied them with the bread of heaven. He opened the rock, and the waters gushed out.*"—Ps. cv. 40, 41.

WHERE God led His people He cared for them. He knew always what He would do. The faith, which made them ready to go out of Egypt at His word, found Him true. They had with them only enough for one day, and the desert offered no fresh supply. God opened His store; food fell around their tents. They said when they saw it, "Manna"—"What is it?" or, "A portion." They did not know the strange bread. They took it as the portion which God gave. He brought quails, meant to be wholesome food, though turned into a curse by their murmurings. The hard rock opened, and fresh cool streams flowed over the hot dry land. The more bare was the desert, the clearer proof they had of God's helping presence.

God gives us our daily bread, as surely as He fed Israel with manna. The corn of the land is our heaven-sent portion, no less mysterious because it is common. We ask the Divine blessing on what we are given for food; we look beyond the means to Him who can do what He will in His own ways. If at His bidding we go forth, leaving the gains of sin, or seeking freedom to serve God, He whom we trust will not forsake us.

Our spiritual life is the gift of the same God. It lasts and it is healthy by the power of His grace. Whether we know it or not, we live by Him who is the Bread of God, and by the streams of grace which flow for us from Christ the living Rock. We are taught how to wait on God, that He may give us what we need. The mysterious power by which our life is invigorated and sustained is hidden from us. No human eye can trace it, no human thought can know the ways of its working. We cannot tell why God chose to use the outward things which tell us of it, or how they are means of grace. We ask, "What is it?" and we can only say, "It is our portion." God has His ordinary methods of grace, without which our souls cannot hope to thrive. But God is free to do what He will with His own souls and His own grace. If we cannot go where means of grace are ready, God can bring grace to us in ways of His own.

"The righteous shall see it, and rejoice: and all iniquity shall stop her mouth."—Ps. cvii. 42.

TO the eye of faith it is always plain on which side God is. But it is often long before the part He takes is made clear to all. Sin seems slow in finding out the sinner; the faithful are tempted to think that they have cleansed their hearts in vain. But God sees to the end from the first; and when God wills, man shall see righteousness exalted and evil put to shame. Those who dare God and vaunt themselves against His law, while He is silent and hidden, shall be still, when they hear His voice and know that He is God.

Much can be said by the sinful and the careless now in excuse for faults and failures; but when the time of judgment comes, all shall be silenced. Before the glory of God everything that rises in rebellion shall be awed down. If we are on God's side now, taking part with all that is good and high and everlasting, God will be on our side in that solemn time. How great the joy of looking on the triumph of Him in whose cause we have fought and have endured! How great the joy of seeing Christ in His glory, never again to be denied and mocked and betrayed and crucified afresh! No more blaspheming of His truth and name; no more calling of evil good and good evil; no more wrongs against the love of God; no more hindering of the good work of that love!

Well may we rejoice if the triumph of righteousness and God be one in which we have our share. It were much that the tempting sounds of an ensnaring world were hushed, that every false voice that marred the purity of truth were dumb, that no unloving whisper broke the calm of our changed and peaceful state. But our joy shall be in more than this. We shall be ourselves, altogether as the will of God would have us be. The strife between the old nature and the new shall be for ever ended. There shall be no discord, when we try to praise and worship God; no struggle when we try to serve Him. No wrong desire shall rise; nothing in us shall ask for what is evil, mistaking it for good. No thought of unbelief shall hide God, or spoil our joy and peace. We shall know that His will is always good; and our wills shall always seek what is good, and shall always bring us to it without toil and without fail.

"*Who is like unto the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high, who humbleth Himself to behold the things that are in heaven, and in the earth!*"—Ps. cxiii. 5, 6.

WE give God all praise when we draw near to Him as our Father in heaven. In these words Christ has taught us to express the lowliest reverence for the Most High, and a thankful holy pride that this God is our God, who cares for us as His children. We never find out all that the words mean: so we are ever being moved to new wonder, and roused to ask in what new ways we can show devotion. There is none whom we can compare to Jehovah: we have no standard by which His greatness can be measured. What is His place and what He is like we cannot tell.

From the highest heavens God is looked up to, as far above them all. But there is with Him no great or small, no far or near; for He sees not as we see. He watches over and upholds all that is. Weakness and need invite His care, and are in themselves a preparation for Him. He who dwells in the high and holy place, dwells with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit. The sense of unworthiness and littleness, which tempts us to the lonely feeling of those who are without God, is indeed His gift to fit us for His indwelling.

We have more cause for wondering praise than the saints of old knew of. He who is God not only looked on our poverty, but for our sake became poor. Behold what manner of love was this! What manner of God is the God with whom we have to do! And that stooping to the very depth was not ended when from the manger and the Cross Christ bore our nature to where He was before. By the Spirit He is with us, He dwells in us. We are made to sit with God in heavenly places in Christ; Christ is with us in the earthly places where still our trial is going on. Along with us He meets our temptations, and bears our sorrows, and bends over our daily tasks. Along with us He presses on towards the joy and glory to which the lowly way of the Cross leads. His gentle noiseless comings almost tempt us to forget who it is to whom our cares are a care, our sins are a grief, our salvation that for which He laid down His life, and for which He lives with us now.

"*The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner.*"—Ps. cxviii. 22.

GOD raised Israel to high glory and power. Again and again they seemed cast away, and trodden down among the heathen; but God saved them that they might carry on His work of grace for the world. They had a hope, though dim and little understood, of the part for which God chose them. The least among the nations was given the chief trust in preparing the world for its Saviour. In Bethlehem Christ was to be born. Jerusalem was to be the "mother of Churches."

Our Lord applies the Psalmist's words to Himself. And S. Peter (1 S. Peter ii. 6) quotes words of the Prophet Isaiah, which point to Christ as the corner-stone of the spiritual Zion. The builders to whose hands the care and building up of God's Church was trusted, put Jesus of Nazareth aside. Those who sat in Moses' seat refused Him. They declared that God's work was to go on without Him, and denied His claims with scorn. God raised Him up and set Him on high, making all that is firm and everlasting rest on Him. He is the chief corner-stone of the Church, that makes sure the foundation which God has laid. Take Him away, and the whole building falls to ruin. Without Him, indeed the Church is not. In Him the Church in heaven and in earth is one.

Time after time the world has seemed to crush the Church and leave her as a laughing-stock. But she has risen up in calm strength to show herself the mightiest power on earth. The words have been proved true, "Whosoever shall fall on this Stone shall be broken;" and again, "He that believeth on Him shall not be confounded." The faith that grasps salvation is trust in Him. Holiness is following His example and obeying His will. Our state before God, our hope for ever, depend on how far we are living stones, built up in union with Him. God confounds the mighty with what in the world's thoughts is weak. Only One can be the chief corner-stone; only those whom God chose can be the foundations; but for each of us who has the honest will to fill well the place for which God fits him, blessing and honour wait. It may be that humiliation may be God's way of preparing us for honour. When the Lord's time comes, we shall marvel at His doing, and marvel that we failed to trace His hand.

"*Teach me good judgment and knowledge: for I have believed Thy commandments.*"—Ps. cxix. 66.

WE cannot find our way alone. We know not how to rule ourselves and to guide our lives, so as to go on safely and reach the good end set before us. We thank God that we have from Him a light for our feet and a lamp for our path. We rest on His words as right and good. We are sure that His commandments have promise in them. They show us more than what pleases or displeases One in whose power we are. They tell us how One who loves us as the creatures of His love, wishes us to live, that we may gain the blessing which His love prepares for us. We have believed God's commandments; we have made up our minds that we can trust the rule of life they give; we are sure that by obeying them we can become worthy to be called His children. But we fear lest we mistake them, or fail in that willing full obedience which will bring us into perfect harmony of will with Him who gives them to us.

We pray to God to write His laws in our hearts, and to make all their meaning clear. But to understand and love them is not all. It is not enough that God has set before us rules of duty, and warned us against sins. We want Him to be with us as an ever-present teacher, making our judgment quick and true, and our knowledge a safe guide. We may say we see, and yet be blind. The light that is in us may be darkness. So we may fall or err, even when we think we stand firmest or move most surely.

It is often hard to know what is right and what is wrong. It is often hard to say which among many is the strongest claim of duty, and which must yield. But there is more than this. There are degrees in right-doing. There are ways of conduct which are not only blameless, but "more excellent." We are called to aim at the fulfilment of the highest duty, from the purest motives, and in the most perfect way. Anything short of this aim is a wilful lowering of the standard which God sets. It is by communion with the mind of God, and by watchful practice under the guidance of His Spirit, that we gain good judgment and knowledge. So shall we be able with quick instinct to see and choose always what is best, and the best way of doing it.

"*Righteous art Thou, O Lord, and upright are Thy judgments.*"—Ps. cxix. 137.

IT is from God that we have our conscience and our sense of right. He has given us the standard and the principles by which we form our judgments. It may seem presumption in us to say that God is true, and that His dealings with men are just. But God bids us hear Him, as He shows that His ways are equal. He asks our trust in Him for what we cannot know fully or as yet. And He claims that we openly declare our faith. Thus we give Him glory; thus we encourage others; thus we help our own faith.

We wonder when we see those who dare God to His face go on with no check. We wonder when the true and good have to bear wrong at the hands of the base and false. We wonder that God's cause fails and His work languishes, when the world's hate is roused, or the Church's love grows cold. All the pain and hardship and cruelty which seem to have no cause or aim raise at times our anxious thought. The sufferings of children and of dumb creatures touch us with a wondering pity, and a longing that things were otherwise. It is hard to look on the sorrows of those near to us in love and kindred, and to feel able to do nothing. God does not blame us for the questions that cry out for an answer.

We do not see all the meaning of what Christ did and bore; much of it is deep and awful mystery. But we do see, in the Incarnation and the Life and the Passion, signs of a love and care for His creatures enough to silence every doubt of God. No little bird falls unmarked, or is wronged without the sin being recorded. He deals with us as with children, caring for us as for those whose life is for ever, shrinking not from giving or withholding as He knows is indeed best. What to us seems happiness and proof of favour may be a sign of rejected care being withdrawn. What we think only a sore trial of faith and faithfulness may be meant to bring us to Him for fresh gifts of grace and blessing. All the love we have is from the one Divine source. So is all the sense of justice that we have. God is more kind than we can ever be, and He is perfect righteousness. He knows all about all things; we only know a little about a few. He will tell us more in His time; meanwhile let us trust and wait.

"*As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about His people, henceforth even for ever.*" Ps. cxxv. 2.

THE rampart of hills round Jerusalem pictured to God's ancient people the Divine power that guarded them. But their high confidence seems to have been vain. The holy places have been overthrown, and they whose glory these were have been driven far and wide over the world. They ceased to be God's people who served Him; so they ceased to be His people whom He kept safely. They did not trust Him as One whose light it was good to seek, whose will it was good to obey. So the covenant was broken, the promises were theirs no more.

But God's word holds good, and is a sure rest for faith now. He always has His people, the children of faithful Abraham. He always has His faithful, whom He never fails. His Church is built upon a rock, and He shields it on all sides. He owns the claim on Him of all who own Him as their Lord. The faith that trusts Him is given more than it looks for. Those who seek wisdom are enlightened. Those who ask to be guided are led safely. Those who long for holiness are cleansed and healed and strengthened. The grace pledged to the Church by the abiding presence of Christ is for each soul.

If we are spiritually in God's keeping, all that may threaten or draw near to harm can only help us in the end. Nothing can move us, while our trust holds fast to the Almighty, and we look to Him as His faithful people. Neither death, nor life, nor any power of any foe can part us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus. He is for ever, though the "lasting hills" shall be removed. He guards us in our time of trial and training, till we are fit for the quiet safety of Jerusalem which is above. Nothing shall there disturb our rest of soul or shake our trust. No enemy shall come near, for nothing shall enter which defileth. Faith shall be perfect in One of whom we are sure. We shall have learned how true God is and how false is evil. The presence of the Most High and Holy shall keep that world pure from all approach of sin, and bestow new blessedness with new powers of enjoyment upon His people for ever.

"Thy Name, O Lord, endureth for ever; and Thy memorial, O Lord, throughout all generations."—Ps. cxxxv. 13.

GOD'S people in old time thought with holy pride of all that shewed how God was ever with them. They told in songs of thankfulness the ways by which He had wonderfully led them. Whatever greatness they had was a proof of His power and favour. Their whole worship was, in its every part, an acknowledgment of past mercies, and a glad expression of hope in One whose word was sure. For His great Name's sake He would not fail to make good His promise, and show Himself the same always.

In the fulness of time God has sent forth His Son, making Himself known in new ways of grace. The wonders of creation and of providence might fail to declare what God is, or to keep us from forgetting Him. His name is marked upon the Church, which is a living monument and witness, telling of what God has done and of what He is now. This is the great miracle of the Divine power, which has been wonderfully working, since Christ sent forth a few weak men to bring Jew and Gentile to the obedience of the faith. In the Name of God the nations have been made to yield, and men have been delivered from the bondage of sin into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. The kingdoms of this world pass away, and those who have established them are forgotten; but the Kingdom of Heaven endures, and one generation after another shows forth the glory of the King.

We call in prayer on Him who in all ages has been the hope of His creatures. We come before Him as His redeemed, claiming humbly, but in sure trust, the rights which He has given us through Christ. We plead those mighty works of grace, by which salvation has been provided, and an inheritance given us among those who are being sanctified. It is our duty and our joy to do all to the glory of God, and in the Name of the Lord Jesus, through whom we know God and are united to Him and are enabled to live to His praise. He is the same yesterday and to-day and for ever. He reveals and brings near to us the God who is glorified in the triumphs of His grace, and who is eternally true to Himself and to those who trust Him.

"*Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips.*"—Ps. cxli. 3.

THE tongue can no man tame. Only God's grace can rein and guide it, so that it may cause no harm, but do well its right work. From sins of word who is free? The man who uses his power of speech without fault is "perfect;" his whole being is under the rule of God. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh;" and often words are hardly spoken before the heart longs to recall them. They do not tell of thoughts which have taken form in the mind, or show the true feeling which is in the man. But perhaps the bolt has flown; the harm is done. The wound may be healed; but it is a wound which the hasty word has made.

Words defile him who speaks and him who hears. Words dishonour God and mark the blasphemer for condemnation. Words wrong the trustful, mislead the weak, hide the truth of God, and bring down God's wrath on those who offend His little ones. Words, again, give God glory, cheer and make plain the path of our brethren, making known the truth and love of God, and winning them to follow Christ. By our words we shall be justified or condemned. For every idle word which does not help to make the world good and bright we must give account to God.

There is a time when silence is sin, when to fear to speak is to dare God. There is a time when it is unwise to say even right things. When we speak to God our words must be few and well thought of, lest we ask wrong things, or pray in a wrong manner, or without a true will to do the will of God. In time of trial we need to guard well our lips in God's Name and strength. For then we are sorely tempted to speak words of bitterness, or pride, or unbelief, or impatience. Always our lips should be open to own our sins, and shut to make excuses for them; open to glorify God, and shut to speak in our own praise; open to teach what is good, shut to speak what may harm the faith or the life of others; open to bless, to cheer, to guide, to make peace, to lead man to love God and his neighbour; shut to speak evil, to stir up strife, to hinder the work of God in souls. So shall we strive by God's help to be like Him who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth.

"He will fulfil the desire of them that fear Him: He also will hear their cry, and will save them."—Ps. cxlv. 19.

GOD is a giver of holiness, and of all other things as they help towards that. His eyes are over the righteous for good; He cares for all the needs of those who seek first for spiritual blessings. He nowhere promises to meet the wishes of those who sin on in careless boldness and have no thought of pleasing Him. He does not say that He will keep the wicked in peace, or save from reaping the fruit of their own doings those who have no true desire to be saved from sin. When we own the power of the claim and promise, "Be ye holy, for I am holy;" when we fear to be out of God's care; when we know that His will is good, and trust ourselves to be ruled by it, then we are one with the Almighty. We fear lest we thwart the Divine purpose that works for our highest welfare.

There is love in fear, though perfected love casts out all fear that has torment. Holy fear comes from a right faith in God, who loves and is to be loved. It makes us watchful lest we grieve Him who seeks our joy. It keeps us earnest to use well His grace, and go in the safe path of His will. It chastens our desires; so that while we make our requests known, we leave all to Him in thankful trust. It does not cast out love; rather it purifies and exalts it, making it a right love for a creature to offer to God. If we fear Him with this true fear, then we have one settled aim to which all else must give way. If the word of Christ abide in us, ruling our wills and guiding us, then we can ask what we will and it shall be done. His goodness shall never have given all, or grow weary in meeting our desires.

If we fear God aright, we need have no fear that spoils peace. He will save us when we cry for help; He will keep us safely, even when we do not know our danger or what help we need. Why should we be daunted by the world's hate, if we live to please God? Why should we dread worldly loss or pain, if we seek the things above and the joys of holiness? Why should we lose heart as we learn our own weakness and sin? He whom we fear will save us from ourselves, when we cry to Him with that longing to be worthy of Him which He gives.

"*Let them also that love Thy Name be joyful in Thee.*"
Ps. v. 11.

BY the Name of God we mean God as He has made Himself known—all that is before the thoughts of those whose faith and hope and love are fixed on God. It tells of all that the Creator is, and pledges Himself to be, to His creatures; all that the Redeemer lives to bestow on those for whom He died; all the high aim and glory to which the Sanctifier calls those whom He purifies to be like God.

Those who trust God find in Him all that man needs of good. So their trust grows, and a larger faith receives fuller, richer blessings. The goodness of God makes known Him who is good. By the proofs of loving-kindness the thoughts are drawn to Him who loves, so that God Himself becomes His people's joy. We learn to love His Name, as faith finds out more what He is, and He becomes a more real presence with us. There is a fear which hath torment, and which casts out love; and there is a holy fear, which makes love to God true and fitting, and which helps to keep safe the joy that love gives.

If we love Him, not only as the giver of joy, but as the Holy One before whom we must be holy, we do well to be joyful in Him. He is our defender, who guards us safely to enjoy the blessings He pours out upon us, warning and strengthening us against all that would part us from Him. We take firm hold on the great hope of what He has in store to be our everlasting portion. He wills ever to add to the worth and number of His blessings, and to enlarge our power of being blessed by them. He wills to reveal Himself more plainly, by purifying our souls, that He may be to our faith a growing joy.

Our spirit can rejoice in God our Saviour, if we welcome Him with an obedient love. He comes near to make Himself one with us; so that, in union with Him, we may have a joy that none can take away. We know that He does not change; so all the changes in the world and in our own state need not lessen or spoil our joy in God. Though all else seem gone, He is left who can be to us more than we have lost, and can give more than we ask or think. If God be our all, He will prove how He can be enough.

"The righteous Lord loveth righteousness; His countenance doth behold the upright."—Ps. xi. 7.

GOD, being what He is, must do right. He sees and judges all men and all things as they are in their true character. He cannot but be on the side of right and against wrong. The evil cannot in the end, or for long, have their way; the upright are known and watched over always.

But, more than this, God is the source and giver of all righteousness in every one. All that we use, and that shows its power in our lives, is His which He has put within us. Because He is righteous, God loves to look upon us when there is a true readiness to be made fruitful; and He rejoices with the truth, as He sees His work go on, and the characters of His children form and ripen towards perfection. It is the new nature from Himself implanted in us that He beholds. He is interested in the cause of righteousness; He cares for its development and growing power in each.

We never can love righteousness as He does, or be so earnest in furthering its triumph, and in withstanding all that hinders its full sway. Whatever will we have to submit ourselves to righteousness tells of the infinitely stronger desire of God to bring our whole being under its Divine and purifying influence. He loveth righteousness, and He loveth us; He longs to love us as righteous, and to see the righteousness which He loveth grow to its perfection in us. We must take heart when evil boasts as if in triumph over good. We are not to think that we alone are moved by what is said or done against the cause of those in whom the righteous Lord beholds a love for that righteousness which He loveth. Their cause is God's, and it is safe with Him. It is not our part to avenge. We dare not lose courage or patience; for that were to doubt Him, as if our love for righteousness were more than His. Our one foe must be sin, our one fear lest we fall from that which the Lord loveth, or in any way fail to work with Him in the cause of righteousness. Christ, who is to us "righteousness," calls us to abide in Him, and tells us how. Let us yield thankfully to all the loving influences by which He would lead us on towards that higher righteousness which God can more love to behold.

"I will behold Thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness."—Ps. xvii. 15.

THOSE who choose to have their portion in this life, and care not to be rich towards God, need not be envied because they gain their good things. If we look deeper and see further, we know that these things are not the best, and do not last. There is nothing in the state after death which can cool the tongue, still thirsting only for carnal and earthly pleasures that are out of reach for ever.

The turning away of God's face is all loss and darkness. To behold Him and meet His look of favour is all good and joy, making the world's worst evils wholesome and full of promise. Our hope rests on the assurance that God is with us, making Himself known to our faith. The earnest of the Spirit, leading us to love and seek for righteousness, tells of what His grace is doing in us. So we know that we have His favour, whether we feel it or not. If He make us what He wills, we leave it to His wise goodness to give us what He wills.

God is seen now in the face of Jesus Christ. We behold, as in a mirror, the glory of God; and as we receive the influence of that on which our soul's gaze is fixed, we are changed into the same image. Christ becomes more and more a righteousness in us as we love the thought of Him and try to live by the faith of Him. Christ in us is the hope of glory. We know how far Christ is in us by the way in which our words and our outward life witness to His rule over our will and nature. Our hope is that when He shall appear we shall appear with Him and be like Him.

We look forward to an awaking to true life, when the night, in which life is a half sleep of the spiritual energies and is filled much with dreams, has passed away, and in God's light the truth of all things shall be seen. Then, when the King comes, we shall see Him and know that He sees us in the wedding-garment which He has given to fit us for His presence. How small, then, shall seem all that we have been denied on earth! What shall it be to have all that God gives of pure good with no drawback; to see clear truth with no mixture of human error; to have a righteousness which is of God, with no painful hunger and thirst, only the noble enjoyment of growth in spiritual glory and greatness which will go on for ever!

"Thou hast made him most blessed for ever: Thou hast made him exceeding glad with Thy countenance."—Ps. xxi. 6.

DAVID was blessed, that he might be a means of blessing. God gifted him, that he might give Israel peace from foes and set in order the worship of the Church. The good things which he had, and which told of God's favour, were not for himself alone, but for him as the shepherd of God's people. He was glad, not as a man only, but as a king zealous for those whom God gave to his care.

So with Christ. Of Him the words are in their full sense true: "In Thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." All the blessing that Christianity has been to the world flowed from Him. To Him is due all that has changed man's life on earth, making him happier and better, and giving him hope. As man, Christ drew down on Himself the utmost good that God's favour can give. He gained the deepest joy of one in whom God is well pleased. He became the Jacob's ladder, by which the angels of Divine love bore to man the gifts of Heaven. In Him was stored the wealth of everlasting good. He was made exceeding glad, because He had so much to pass on to us. All is for our sake, that God may be glorified in blessing us, till all is summed up in the call "Come, ye blessed of My Father." God sees us as members of His Son. He looks on us as we are in Him; and unworthy though we be, we are gladdened by the favour which Christ deserves. "It pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell;" and of that fulness we receive.

Through Him we can have quiet in our own hearts, and peace with God. We can meet our trials calmly, and find all things work for good. We can have rest from our foes, being made strong to drive back their assaults and weaken their power. Through Him we can keep our natures under rule, holding down each lawless desire, and using each power so as to help our welfare. Through Him we can draw near to God in prayer and praise and sacrifice, and gain all the manifold blessings which His merits won. In the face of Jesus Christ we can behold the glory of God, and know Him whose Name is Love, and be exceeding glad. What blessing waits for our growing faith to grasp, till we are with the blessed who rejoice for ever in the light of God's countenance!

"I will wash mine hands in innocency: so will I compass Thine altar."—Ps. xxvi. 6.

WHERE the life is false and impure, worship gives God no glory and gains no blessing from Him. Hands must be clean which bring gifts to the Holy One. He who asks God to accept his offering, must be able to ask God to search his heart, as well as to hear what his lips say. He whose firm will is to walk in a true course and to do right, need not shrink because he fails to overcome his faults at once; he is glad that he knows them, and he spreads them before God with prayer.

It is vain to serve God in word and worship, unless we serve Him in what we do and are. We seek to glorify Him in our lives, that His ears may be open to our praises. Innocency fits us to praise Him; it shows His glory; it is our greatest blessing for which we praise Him. He gives the watchful purity of aim, which makes us disown evil as a thing we hate and wish to be separate from. He enables us to use our active powers, so that our work may be less and less marred by sin. But we must bathe in the streams of which He tells us, till we gain the purity of a little child.

If we are pure in hand we are pure in heart, and can see God with growing plainness. So the wonders which God works call us to more thankful adoring praise; the ways in which He makes known His presence become more real and attractive. We love each place where He specially bids us draw near to find Him, and where He reveals the glory of His goodness. We draw near to the altar on which we lay our gifts, and whence His blessing comes in answer to our worship. We hold fast to it; we clasp it. We own that God is the One whom we adore as the only hope of our souls.

We have a better altar than David had, and a way of nearer approach to God. We offer the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving which He has ordained, uniting ourselves with the Holy One who ever liveth to plead for us on high. We offer ourselves, our souls and bodies, in union with Him whose merits gain us the right to draw near, and whose righteousness makes us worthy. We are one with Him in what He does in heaven. He is one with us, enabling us to offer in His Name what God will accept.

"*Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord.*"—Ps. xxxi. 24.

GOD'S mercies in the past tell us what to count upon always. His word is sure, and He will do more than even our highest thoughts can take His promises to mean. However much He may have done, however great the power He may have used in our behalf, still the utmost only stirs up our hope for yet larger signs of infinite goodness. Though we seem low and lost and forgotten in the midst of sorrows and temptation, if we are true in heart to God, our posture must be that of hope.

We expect the Lord to give, in His own right time, the aid we long for. We desire the gifts which He bids us wait to gain. To lose hope is to show that we are unbelieving, and that we feel left without a God to whom we can give our hearts. We hope in Him so long as we love and trust Him. While we hope in Him we can bear the loss of all other hopes. He can make up for whatever fails or disappoints. In trial we find out our strength, and are led to seek the Divine help that braces and increases it.

Our heart is apt to yield in steadfast courage and to lose its firm hold on the aim before it. God tells us that this need not be; for He in whom we hope knows how much we are pressed and how weak we feel. We can be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might, with whom we are one. When He tells us to be strong and very courageous, He reminds us of His own power already made ours, which we are to put forth and use. He assures us that for all we have to do and to bear, the needful power shall be ready in us.

As we lift our heads boldly, wearing for a helmet the hope of salvation, and as we prove the weapons placed in our hands, we learn how well God arms and nerves us. We get to have our full strength and all our weapons ready. So our courage grows, and we know that, as we persevere, each right use of the grace we have will be a waiting upon the God in whom we hope, for new gifts of strength, to be used in a yet higher calling and for His greater glory. We may be thankful for the tests which call forth our courage, and fix our hope more on God, who can make firm our will and keep us cheerful in hearty steadfastness even to the end.

"*O continue Thy loving-kindness unto them that know Thee; and Thy righteousness to the upright in heart.*" Ps. xxxvi. 10.

SO far as we know God we know His loving mercy and His righteousness. With Him is the fountain of life and of the pleasures in which the soul of man finds rest. We would not have Him change His wise and holy ways of ruling all things. We ask Him but to continue His loving-kindness till its work is crowned. Our prayer tells of faith that all is well with those over whom the wings of God's care are spread.

God is loved where He is known. He who is Love can only be rightly known by love. Our love is because He first loved us; and it is in us a pledge that He loves us, and that He will go on revealing more and more that love which is His very being. So with God's righteousness. We know Him as the giver of whatever sense of truth and right we have. So far as we are quick to see and choose the good path, we witness to the righteousness of God. Our conscience tells of light from light's source, and of One greater than our hearts who knoweth all things. He gives the shrinking from evil; He cleanses from evil; He gives through Christ that righteousness which will make us like Christ. In loving faith we commit ourselves to Him as to a faithful Creator, sure that all His paths are mercy and truth.

Knowing God, we dare not grieve His loving-kindness or trifle with His righteousness. We cannot be false in heart, as if that pure eye could be deceived. Keeping God's commandments, we abide in His love, we stray not from the path where His loving-kindness is ever newly going forth. We trust Him when He gives laws, as well as when He promises. We watch lest we waver in the steadfast uprightness that takes His righteousness for granted. The knowledge of faith is helped by the knowledge of experience, as we get to know Him in whom we have believed. God's loving-kindness and righteousness change not, though shown in manifold forms. We know Him truly though imperfectly; we are upright in heart and will, though our lives are full of shortcoming. We unite ourselves in aim with God, that His loving-kindness may fulfil all its work, that His righteousness may conquer evil in us, and at last triumph over all that rises up against it.

"*I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me.*"
Ps. xl. 17.

CHRIST for our sake became poor. In His man's nature He was in the world, bare of all things, and dependent. The love that tended the Holy Child, the will and strength with which the man Christ Jesus provided for His own needs, proved God's care. In the wilderness, when no other aid was at hand, God's angels came. God put it into the hearts of those who sought spiritual good to share with Him their worldly substance. His Father is ours. We are in the Lord's thoughts. He overlooks nothing.

This truth makes our whole life and all that upholds and cheers it a ceaseless call to faith and thanksgiving. We are not our own handiwork, and we live on by no power but God's. What are we, and what have we that does not prove that the Lord thinketh upon us? Did He forget, or cease His care, it would at once be as if He had never thought to call us into being. In all we do for ourselves, we use powers of thought and heart and will and strength which are from Him; we wait on Him for His gifts in His chosen ways. Poor we are, for we have nothing; needy we are, for we want so much. Day by day we must come to God for all by which we live and enjoy our life. So it is with our spiritual needs. What have we or can we have that we do not owe to His care? How shall our souls gain the food by which they can live and be strong, the clothing of righteousness to fit them for God's presence?

Only from the wealth of God can our poverty be relieved. Our want is our chief claim on God's mercy. He knoweth what things we have need of before we ask Him. He knows how we have been stripped and wounded and left helpless by His foes. He bids us think upon our state, and feel how poor we are, and how much we need from Him, and how freely He gives; only blaming us because we do not ask enough. Having nothing, yet we have all things, while each of us in our varied needs can say, "The Lord thinketh upon me." Rich in what faith grasps and puts into the hand of hope, we can live as heirs of the kingdom with its store of blessedness and glory. All things are ours, while the Lord thinketh upon us, and we are Christ's, and Christ is God's.

"*Be still, and know that I am God.*"—Ps. xlvi. 10.

GOD is God in all the meaning of the name. The world that knows not God boasts of its power and freedom. All the while it is helpless in the hands of Him whom it scorns. The world wars against the Church, with no thought that God is in the midst of her, and that the attack is made on Him. There comes a day when the Lord shall be exalted, and all that lifts up itself in pride and selfwill shall be brought low before Him. His glory shall be owned among the nations, and in "the earth," that is, the Church, the Holy Land where He has placed His Name.

Now God calls men to "be still," to pause in their thoughtless course, and learn the truth which one day they must face. God can stop what seems strongest, He can calm what seems wildest with His word, "Peace, be still." All things must work for His glory in the end. And so His true people need to be called away from those many cares which shake their nerve and spoil their peace. When God's truth or God's honour or God's work is assailed, there is often a panic as if all were lost. The temptation comes to meet the world with weapons like its own; and to act as if God had left His cause, so that all hope rested upon us. And in our own times of need, we are in danger of acting and speaking and thinking as if we were by ourselves. We fail in thoughtful patience and in prayer. We live in the fuss and excitement of toil and controversy; and it is as if we had no time or strength for quiet communion with God. We may indeed come to be as if there were no God, on whose strength we can lay hold, and whose care is watchful always. We may act as if we could do without God, but God could not do without us.

It is when we seem most hurried, that we can least spare the times of refreshment alone with God. It is when our faith is tried the hardest, that we need most to be still, and to realise that the world we see is not all; that there is a living God. We find strength and hope as we turn from the world's noise, and let the calm power of the presence of God come in upon our spirits. We go forth again to our work, knowing that He is God in whom we have believed, sure that He will keep us unto the day when He shall give His people rest.

"*As for me, I am like a green olive tree in the house of God: my trust is in the tender mercy of God for ever and ever.*" Ps. lii. 8.

MAN'S glory is to be like God. Strange that man should boast of his power to harm, while God rejoices to make Himself known by signs of unchanging goodness. The ungodly forget from whom all their power comes, and use it as their own, for which no account will be asked. What God leaves in their hands during His pleasure, they turn against Him and those who are His. Wealth lifts them up with pride, and they act as if God would bow before it as well as man. The long-suffering by which He would win men to repentance makes them bold to dare Him and to wrong His people.

It is wild folly to make God's love and might bring doom instead of ensuring safety. God's foes are borne with for a while; God lives on and His goodness lasts. Each day fresh calls can be made on it, but it is not spent. We can wait, as God does, while evil tongues do their worst, and those who hate us for God's sake dash themselves against His strength. Ere long all this shall be past, and God shall be left for us to trust in and enjoy in peace. His tender mercy shall give all we need. His strength shall make sure to us the quiet of those who fear no foe. Our faith is tried now, that it may be more firmly fixed and may draw more grace to make us pure and strong. When trial has done its work, faith shall take the form of trust in One seen and known, who is the source of holiness and joy for ever.

Now we are where God has planted us, in the shelter of His house, where He makes His Presence known. There may be times of drought or storm; but our leaf need not wither; we need not fail to bear, along with the leaves of open profession, the rich fruit of devotion and holy living. We may strike root downward where God has prepared the nourishment we need. We may have a firm grasp, so that no blast can stir us. We may draw into ourselves the grace which will show its presence by the vigour of our Christian life. And we may grow and ripen under the light and blessing of that heaven towards which we stretch. So our life of trust is a life of praise to Him who is true to His Name.

"Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily He is a God that judgeth in the earth."—Ps. lviii. 11.

MAN cannot read the heart, or know all about what he sees and hears. He is seldom free from bias and able to judge quite calmly. He sometimes makes the heart of the righteous sad by his mistaken hardness, and makes the wicked bolder by want of firmness. God deals to each his due, as unfailing wisdom and the love of the Almighty fix. But God has eternity in which to work out His calm will. His work goes on now, but we do not yet see the end. He is our judge, we are not His; even were it otherwise, we have only part of the case before us.

In the world which we cannot see, much that has seemed strange is known to have been right and just. Souls find there, that all along they have been under God's eye and within reach of His hand, and that they are so still. Men who were tempted to doubt God's care and to think themselves forsaken, feel the soothing hand of God give them rest, and can trace the ways by which the same hand shaped their earthly course. Men who have lived as if God's word meant nothing, learn how their doom surely gathered over them.

Righteousness is its own reward, and so is sin. Each has its power for blessing or cursing. In the world where a just God reigns, it must be so. That it is so proves God just. A man's true joy and wealth are in the pure and high and god-like nature which is gained by living as God guides, with the aim that God gives. The evil receive in themselves the recompence that is meet. What is true and pure and great withers. They perish day by day. Powers which they misuse or fail to use are spoiled or lost. A dread punishment is ever falling. The soul that sinneth dies. So there is a secret gain or loss measured out to each soul by a sure law. Men are seen to reap as they sow, even before the time of full harvest. Good things come to those who obey God's will, and evil things come to the evil. Men think of holiness and sin when they trace these things to their cause. They bow before Him who works by means, making His will felt. They own that it is "the Lord's doing." We are content to wait in faith till God's time. But our faith is helped to be strong and quiet, when we see proofs that God judgeth in the earth.

"*All men shall fear, and shall declare the work of God; for they shall wisely consider of His doing.*"—Ps. lxiv. 9.

GOD sometimes seems to let the evil have their way. But, all the while, His work is being done well. He is pleading by His patience, that they may repent; and He is proving His faithful ones, that they may grow in faith. When the right hour comes, there is a quick end to the boasting of the wicked and the trial of the true. God's judgments warn men to flee from sin, lest its curse fall on them. They tell of One who longs to save men from the last ruin, to rouse conscience, and to cheer those who might think their cause forsaken.

When Christ left Himself in the hands of those who slew Him, all seemed lost. Yet when Christ rose, men knew how God had used the malice of sin to work sin's fall and to make sin feared. No one had any power at all against Him, except what was given of His Father. We think with awe of the judgments which the Jews called down upon themselves. We read with wonder of the glad trust and courage with which the followers of the risen Lord faced the world. They gloried in the cross; they rejoiced to be counted worthy to bear shame for Christ's sake. They declared the work of God, calling men everywhere to bow before Him who is to be feared, and to trust Him who never fails His people.

God, sooner or later, forces all men to own His might and the holiness of His dealings. All shall give God glory, even those to whom mercies and judgments have been alike in vain, and to whom the day of the Lord is darkness and not light. But we would trust in One who makes glad even in time of hardest trial, and who in the midst of wrath remembers mercy. We would glory in One who glorifies us, bringing us out of the fire of temptation purified for His holy uses. If we are glad in Him as One to whom we look in trust to conquer our sin and to make us righteous, He will make us glad in Him as the giver of peace, when the time for quiet comes. If we seek above all things to be upright in heart, with none but true thoughts towards Him, and with a will firmly set to what is good, He will keep us from falling, and present us faultless before the presence of His glory. Then we shall glory in the Lord, whose work we are. The wicked shall cease from troubling, and we shall be at rest.

"*Ascribe ye strength unto God: His excellency is over Israel, and His strength is in the clouds.*"—Ps. lxviii. 34.

THE world of Nature and the world of grace come from God, and both are ruled by Him. Both tell His power and wisdom and goodness. The forces that work in them are the movements of His will bringing to pass His ends. In both there is that which speaks His presence, and which yet veils Him. The voice is sent forth, but the speaker is behind the cloud. We can watch what God does, but the doer is unseen. We hear the sound that calls us to bow before a present God, but what we know of Him we learn by faith. The means are in our hands, but why they are means, or how anything is a cause, no man knows.

Blessed be God, who has made all things and in whose hands all things are! By His will Nature moves in an orderly way, and we can count upon it in what we do. We know where to find the help we need, and how to lay hold of the strength of God. And while we praise Him for the gifts spread before us, we think with wondering awe of the great reserves of power with which the Almighty and Eternal is ready to bless His creatures. Thought fails in trying to gather from what He does what He can and will do. The voice of warning from the clouds of Sinai, and the quiet steady working of the vast machinery of Nature, call us to worship the Almighty.

We are in another world, over which He holds as firm sway. He who is on high makes all things fit surely into their place in His scheme of good. As the spirit of man is nobler than his body, so is the Church a higher manifestation of God's glory than the world of material things. "His excellency is over Israel." His majesty seems nearer, His voice plainer in the workings of His grace, than in the ways of Nature and Providence. Dead Nature does not know Him; the kingdoms of the world do not acknowledge Him. We rejoice in Him whom we obey, and we know that He is pleased by our obedience. We feel the power of earthly things and the weight of our own weakness; but the God of Israel gives His Israel strength. There is an awfulness in that might with which God draws nigh to our souls, coming from His holy places by His holy means of grace, with holiness to make us holy.

"*His Name shall endure for ever: His Name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in Him: all men shall call Him blessed.*"—Ps. lxxii. 17.

WHEN we speak or hear the Name of Christ, He is before us as He is made known. Christ is more than heard of by the ear, or thought of in the mind: we feel the power of what His words of truth and His works of grace reveal Him to be. Before the worlds were, Christ was fore-ordained the King, to give to men the blessings of His rule. The Psalmist speaks here of His Name being fruitful, budding with shoots that grow and flourish. As He is made known, the living power that is in Him works and shows itself in those who draw their life from Him. Into His Name we are baptized. Thus made one with Him by the Holy Spirit's work, we become partakers of His everlasting life; and so while we abide in Him we can never perish. Till the sun of time goes down and night ends the day of grace, His Name shall be preached; souls shall be added unto Him.

Lord of all, and specially of His Israel, He shall ever seek to bring men where His best gifts are the portion of His chosen ones. We lift up our hearts in joyful waiting for that which we are sure of on His word. We look for, and we hasten by what He gives us grace to do, that time when the whole earth shall be His kingdom, and the glory of His Name, felt everywhere, shall make all men glad. Blessed is He in His place on high, won by His sorrows. As we know Him in His glory, we shall long and labour to be indeed one with Him and to grow to be as He is, so far as the creature and the saved can be like the Creator and the Saviour.

How devout should be our study of the wonders which grace is ever working! How loving should our thought be of Him whose care for us is always loving and tender! How watchful and untiring should be our prayer that nothing in us may hinder us from being blessed, as those who abide in Him by using well the gifts with which He blesses! How earnestly should we thank Him by our zealous work; being blessed in giving to others what we receive! How full and heartfelt shall be the praise with which the blessed shall at last bless Him whose goodness has brought them to the presence of His glory in the new heaven and the new earth!

"*Thy way is in the sea, and Thy path in the great waters, and Thy footsteps are not known.*"—Ps. lxxvii. 19.

WHEN Israel trembled, with their foes behind them and the sea in front, God knew His way, and how to make a walled path for His people. The powers of Nature felt the presence of Him who had made them for His own ends. He could as easily bring in upon them the force of His will for a special work, as He could give them at first the powers which they were commonly observed to show. His people were saved, and He was glorified as the God of Nature and of Providence and of Grace. The waters that threatened to hem them in as a prey to their foes, fought for them, and stood between them and harm, shutting off the old life of bondage for ever.

So does God lead and save us now by the hand of Christ. He speaks to us to go forward, seeking our promised land. The powers that have enslaved us do not willingly yield their hold. Even when we have turned our backs on sin, and have set forth in the way of faith and obedience, they follow to bring us back again to bondage. It will seem at times as if we had no strength to resist, and there were no opening for escape. But He who trod the waves of the Sea of Galilee can stretch His rod of power over the pathless deep of the troubled future. Through what threatens our ruin He will bring us safety. We shall pass from trembling faith to triumph and songs of praise. We shall look back upon the waters of trial, and know that the powers of sin are dead and can molest no more.

We need not ask to see our way, or to know why it is that Christ leads us by such untried and winding paths. Enough for us if we are sure that we have sought safety in God's way by the sprinkling of the Lamb's blood, and that, resolved to be free, we go forth as pilgrims, seeking the better country. It is for our Leader to find and make the way. It is for us to see that where He leads we follow. The signs of power, that strike awe into the hearts of those who know Him not, only tell us of our redemption. When we see before us the dark waters of death, when powers of evil gather round and remind us of our past, One is nigh who has gone through those floods before us. He will lead us on; and when death is left behind, we shall be parted for ever from evil.

"*I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust: and they walked in their own counsels. Oh that My people had hearkened unto Me!*"—Ps. lxxxi. 12, 13.

GOD seeks the good of those whom He has made and has chosen to be His own. He is grieved when they will not have His blessings, and when they receive His grace in vain. He mourns, as Christ did over Jerusalem, when the things that should have been for man's peace are hid from his eyes. He warns loudly those who forget Him. He cheers those who love and do His will. At times His love and goodness are plainly seen; at times they must be taken on trust. While men are open to the influences of grace, God is patient and pleads on. When they are slow to hear or to obey, He rebukes, that they may be zealous and repent.

God's ways are the only ways of life. We bless Him that by any means He brings us back from straying into paths of death. Our own desires mislead and betray: our own wisdom is folly. We know not what is good, or how to seek it. Well for us to learn, even by sore discipline, our need of God! Well for us to be warned, even in sad and humbling ways, of the shame and hurt from which only God can keep us safe! We thank Him, as we look down into the depth of helpless sin from which His voice and hand have saved us.

How dreadful when those who would not hearken cannot hear; when those who have refused to obey are left to go where they will, ruled only by their own evil desires! Free from righteousness, they find the fruit of their own ways in shame and death, in the utter degradation of their nature, and final parting from the God of grace. The good things which God gives to those who let Him rule and guard them are lost; and that love is lost which finds its joy in saving those who have wounded it. What happened to Israel is written for our learning. We dread yielding to our own hearts' lusts, lest we give ourselves over to them and be left in their power. We dread following the counsels of our own will, lest God let us go away from Him. We rejoice in God, to whom we can hearken now, who desires our good and guides us how to gain it.

"Lover and friend hast Thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness."—Ps. lxxxviii. 18.

WHEN Christ took flesh He felt the loneliness which the holy feel in a sinful and unloving world. The companionship of heaven, the nearness of the pure and true, were longed after but not enjoyed. In His earthly ministry He was parted from those who were His kindred according to the flesh. He had to leave them while He did His Father's business; and in doing that He was more and more lifted above the reach of their sympathy. All were indeed far off from Him in the whole way of the Cross. He had to rebuke S. Peter when he would have turned Him from His path. At last those who had continued with Him in His temptations were offended and forsook Him.

The disciple is as His Master. The Master is in and with the disciples whom He calls to leave all and follow in His steps. He bears in them what He has borne for them, and brings, to help their weakness, the power of the God of their salvation. Often those to whom God's call comes must choose between the claims of a higher and a lesser love, between Christ and what seems their all. If the world has loved us as its own, we lose that when we are no longer of the world, when we give our hearts to Him with whom the world is at enmity. This is more fully true when Christ looks on us and loves us, and, because He loves us, asks of us some more than common separation from all that would rival Him.

Even when God is felt to be near, and we enjoy the freshness of the new life of happy following, it is hard to be parted in place from those who have been about our daily path; it is harder to lose their sympathy and love. It is a sore trial of faith when we have left all for God, and He seems to be out of sight and beyond our reach; when we long for that which can meet our hearts with the sympathy they need, and find, instead of all we have lost and all we have hoped for, what seems only darkness. But it is not only darkness, even when life here seems ending in heaviness and gloom. For all we leave and lack that we may follow the call of God, there is a promised good beyond our largest thought. Enough for us to spread all humbly before God, and know that He is true for ever.

"*Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God.*"—Ps. xcii. 13.

GOD is most high for evermore. He will do right to all. We cannot trace His thoughts and ways, for they are not as ours. Those who love Him not, nor fear Him, often seem to flourish; but it is as the grass that soon withers. The godly flourish like the strong trees which bear the heat and drought and blast, losing none of their health and fruitfulness; for they draw life from God while they stretch up towards heaven and root themselves more deeply where grace is found. Those who seek their good in worldly things are without much of the discipline which would give them strength. Those who give themselves into God's hands are dealt with wisely by a love, which in caring for them does not spare them, that they may bring forth more fruit.

God plants us in His Church. To Him we owe our state of hope and the power to bear fruit unto holiness. He tends us as His own, and for Himself. Planted in the house of the Lord, we can draw upon the sources of life, and that by which we grow and thrive is out of reach of this world's changes. If our life be hid with Christ in God, then in Christ we are where He is, in heavenly places, in the very house of the Lord on high. But we have to do now with the outer courts of that house in the Church on earth. We must show here the life and vigour which we receive from above.

Our fruitfulness proves that we indeed flourish. The good works which we do for God make known what God has done for us and is doing in us. As we pray, and use means of grace, we declare our faith in Him who thus enables us to have our part in the life of Christ. In our active love to God and man we put forth the power of God which comes to us through Christ. So in our seeking and using grace we show our sure trust that, as time goes on, more gifts of blessing and more power to bless shall be ours. Far better to gain grace, which is the might of the love of the eternal God, than to be rich in all this world's fading good. Far better to bear for a while the heat and storm, which will but make us firm in our place and fruitful for Him who tends us. We hope to be planted beside the streams of Paradise and to flourish in the shelter of the Most High for evermore.

"*Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart.*"—Ps. xcvii. 11.

THE true in heart, whose will is to be and to do right, is in the care of God. He knows that he fails and comes short and is but striving towards righteousness; but he holds fast to God, who will do more than he dare hope for. God keeps his soul. The holiness of God is the hope and joy of man. It is the assurance that God wills to make us holy, and it is the source from which our holiness comes. Light has come into the world, and we have been made the children of light, that we may walk in the light till the eternal day dawn.

The way of those who love darkness because their deeds are evil is without light. They know not whither they go, till they find themselves in outer darkness, with the deceitful lights of earth all gone out. God takes away what men will not use. But the same Presence which is darkness to His foes, gives light to His people who wish their deeds to be wrought in God. Heaven will at times seem black and silent to those who look most earnestly heavenward. Doubts come which make all seem unreal even to those whose hearts are fixed on high. Through much tribulation and perplexity those who strive to follow Christ must persevere. But the Lord liveth, and is the same through the night of sorrow and the day of joy. We can call to mind His holiness, and go forward with a thankful courage. Need and loneliness make us prize Him more. The signs within us of His Spirit leading our desires give comfort in the night of hard trial.

But no one is without light to shew the way; and each step we take is made plain, even though we cannot see far before us. The same light which shows the way cheers it. There is even a joy in overcoming difficulty, and in the feeling of Divine strength given to go forward bravely. But light from heaven falls ever on the path, full of promise of the perfect day. It is our duty to watch for and our privilege to enjoy this. We should encourage happy thoughts of God and rejoice in Him. The remembrance of His holiness should rouse us to thankfulness. He is Lord over all and the Saviour of all, specially of those who believe unto righteousness and seek for the holy land of which we read that "the Lamb is the light thereof."

"Bless ye the Lord, all ye His hosts; ye ministers of His, that do His pleasure."—Ps. ciii. 21.

GOD is King. All that He has made is His own. All powers which He has called into being move under His control. All who live are subjects of His realm. His throne is set in heaven, above the rise and fall and growth and decay of this changing world. When we pass from a world which hides Him, we shall know how strong He is, and how true. All things serve Him and minister to His glory; rousing adoration in those who trace the works of Divine wisdom and goodness.

The holy ones on high, who are near the throne, delight to study the glorious works of their Lord. They count it their great privilege to be given a part, however lowly, in carrying out the wonderful schemes of providence and grace. They feel a special joy in ministering to those who are heirs of the blessedness which God has given them. Sinless, they love to bring God's help to the fallen, that they may rise to a sinless state, saved by the work and sacrifice of Christ.

We know not how to bless God as we ought. The more clear our view of His glory, the more unworthy seem our best powers to be used in the praise of God. What are we, that we should dare to hope that even the mercy which we try to praise will accept our poor offering? But we are fellow-citizens with the saints. Our conversation is in heaven; we are one with the Church on high. The strength of the holy ones is put forth in full and glad obedience. Their lofty intellects, their pure love, their mighty and trained powers are devoted to working the ends of the Divine will. We associate ourselves with them, that the united songs of heaven and earth may come before God. We are roused by the example and the fellowship of the angels. We feel the honour and privilege of being thus allowed to take a part in the worship which they love to bring before the throne. They delight to have us with them now, as those for whom their Lord cares. So their thought of us adds new joy to their devotion, as the thought of them is an encouragement and help to us. They praise God in their ministries for God to us; we praise Him as we grow to be more fit for our inheritance, and more able to join with angels and archangels in the anthems of the immortal.

"They inherited the labour of the people; that they might observe His statutes, and keep His laws."—Ps. cv. 44, 45.

ISRAEL left Egypt, rich with the gifts of those who feared them and their God. When the desert was crossed, they found cities which they had not built, and vineyards and oliveyards which they had not planted. The nations whom God had placed in a land abounding with all sources of wealth were cast out as unworthy. If they were judged for sinning against such light as they had, Israel might well fear to despise God's clear voice.

The history of the world shows how God indeed rules. Men and nations may go on for a while, seeming to prosper, unchecked by Him whose name they blaspheme. But an end comes to all that is not of God. The onward march of God's host is sure, though to man's impatience or unbelief it may seem slow. Kingdoms fall which are not ruled by God. The King of kings exalts and dethrones at His will. He guides the course of history, giving to race after race its vantage-ground and its responsibility. The end of all is the kingdom of God and of His Christ, which is to stand for ever, and in which those who obey Him shall have a part.

The Church, in another way, turns to holy uses the fruit of the labours of the world. Wealth which selfish avarice has hoarded is, under her influence, devoted to works of love. Power which a nation has gained by ambition, is turned to use in pushing forward the heralds of the gospel and protecting the cause of truth. So territory gained in the spirit of heathens is opened to the efforts of Christian zeal. The civilising influences of peoples who had only thoughts of their own worldly progress and earthly enjoyment have been used to prepare the way for the teaching of higher aims.

So also with the wisdom and the learning of the world. The Church welcomes all that helps man to know more of himself, and of the world in which he lives, and of the far-off worlds around him. Guided by the Church, we feel what a heritage of good is ours and what a God ours is. We see how the history of the world and the course of Nature show forth His glory. We try to observe His statutes and keep His laws, that we may have part in the triumph of His kingdom, and praise Him for ever.

"*Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord.*"—Ps. cvii. 43.

MEN may note with care what passes in the world, and diligently group and arrange facts; but their greatest knowledge is so small as to be in God's sight ignorance. Men may boast of far-seeing wisdom in the things of time; but to God their highest wisdom is mere foolishness. They alone are truly wise who know God, and look for the wisdom that cometh from above to guide them into clearer fuller light.

Strange that God's love should work so mightily and be unmarked, forgotten, or denied! Strange that the forces busy and fruitful in Nature rouse wonder and awe, while earnest searchers after knowledge fail to look past the machine to Him who made and guides it! Strange that men eat of the fruit of their own doings, that good is brought wondrously out of evil, and yet that God's place and work in the world of men are hardly thought of! Surely he is wisest who can look with clearest eye through the work to the Worker, and who can learn most truly what the mind of the Lord is.

The God of Nature is a nobler object of thought than Nature; the God of providence than the fortunes of men who are His care. If we are wise in wishing to be wise, we study the course of things as those who look for God and would know Him. And so we learn His will; we learn how strong He is; we learn how true His word of promise is; we learn how to guide our lives so as to fall in with the Divine plan for our perfect and everlasting good.

There is often much and long trial of faith, for God hides Himself. But, if we are wise, we do not forget the past in the present, or forget what God has proved Himself to others, because of what He seems to be towards us. We remember what God has done in healing and saving and in giving refreshment and peace to weary storm-tossed souls. Faith comes to our help; and as we meditate upon the ways of God, and learn our own needs, what has seemed dark grows light. We understand the loving-kindness of the Lord when we are cheered and glad. We understand it also in times of trial, when we bow to the will of One whom we trust. We know that He is Love, and that it is only our lack of wisdom that hinders us from recognising love in all He does.

"*He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill; that He may set him with princes.*" Ps. cxiii. 7, 8.

JACOB was made Israel—"a prince with God"—when he had wrestled through the night, and had prevailed. God met him, an outcast and a wanderer; He sent him on his way, strong in the dignity which the Divine blessing gave. True honour is that which comes from God. Whatever ranks there may be among men for the good order of the world, those are indeed high-born who are made partakers of the Divine nature. Their place is exalted because their nature is ennobled.

This glory is within the reach of all. God is no respecter of persons; He does not judge men by the standards used among their fellow-men. He treats all as alike in need of that raising which is His great aim and work. This has been more plain since Christ was made flesh and was born among the poor. Christ preached the Gospel to the poor. It is good news to those who feel that they are poor in that which it offers. The rich in this world's good may think that they have need of nothing, while in God's sight they are starving. The poor in this world may long in vain for what the world denies them, while the treasures and glory of heaven are within their reach.

When with the eye of faith we see God, then we see ourselves and learn our degradation. We are shown also what God means for us, and we are roused to a high ambition. We learn at once our need and our hope; from whence we have fallen, and to what we may rise. There is lowliness in our joy, and there is joy in our lowliness. However great our need, there is no state of spiritual honour to which He is not willing and strong to raise us. We are joined to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to the holy ones who stand in the presence of God. We can call the Most High King our Father. Our lot on earth may be among those whom men count lowest; but we may feel, like Christ while He sojourned on earth, that our true life is not here. He will lift us in heart above passing things, and keep us undefiled. In His own time He will raise us from the dust of death, and set us among the glorified who are around His throne.

"*Save now, I beseech Thee, O Lord: O Lord, I beseech Thee, send now prosperity.*"—Ps. cxviii. 25.

THIS psalm was part of the processional song which was chanted at the Feast of Tabernacles. God's people praised Him, and sought new blessings, as they recalled their life in the wilderness on the way to the promised land. The worshippers bore branches of palm and willow, which they waved before God, shouting at intervals, "Hosanna!" or, as the word means, "Save now!" With the same word the multitude praised God as Christ went in His lowly triumph.

We use the word with a clearer faith, and a larger, surer hope. We know who Christ is, and how in Him our God brings His salvation nigh. We declare our faith in Him; we come before Him as those to whom He has given a claim on His grace. When we greet Him with signs of triumph as a conqueror, we hail, as if already ours, the fruit of His victory over all our spiritual foes, and the peace which His holy warfare wins. As we call Him Lord, we own ourselves His servants, pledged to do His will and seek His glory.

Christ comes to His Church, there to look around on all things, and there in His time to make felt His cleansing power. He comes bringing salvation and imparting righteousness to those who, at last, are to be among His saved. We try to share with Him His sorrow for those who will not know Him as the giver of peace. We try to be one with Him in calling souls to come to Him for rest and salvation. We are still in the wilderness, seeking a country, hoping for a home in Jerusalem which is on high. We keep our feast of tabernacles, remembering that we sojourn in the earthly house of this tabernacle, while we are being disciplined for life in the eternal house not made with hands.

Hosanna!—"Save now!"—must be the prayer of our adoring hearts always. Christ has saved us; He has become our Saviour, and He will save to the uttermost. We look for that prosperity which is real and is for ever; we know it can only come if sent by Him. We pray Him to send it. Rest and glory are prepared for the Church as the end of her long weary pilgrimage and time of humiliation. Be it our care that we take part in the Church's work and prayer and worship; and be of her now, that we may be of her then.

"Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept Thy word."—Ps. cxix. 67.

WHEN we are free from care we are apt to be careless. When the world is bright around us, we often fail to look beyond it. Gifts hide the giver. The love of God, shown in what He gives us richly to enjoy, should draw our hearts to Him and keep us faithful. But we are ready to take for granted all that makes life pleasant. Our health and friends, our joys and comforts, seem things of course, and as if they were ours by right. So we lose the feeling of dependence on God and of duty to Him.

We do not learn what the Divine goodness is till some of its bounties are withdrawn. God lays His hand on something which we enjoy apart from Him, or which tempts us to forget and forsake Him. He reminds us that it is His, and that we have it only while He wills. When we have erred, the goodness of God ought to lead us to repentance. But if sin is followed by no change in the peace or brightness of our lives, we are in danger of thinking little of it. In the loneliness of sickness or bereavement, when the world's voices are hushed, and our hearts are free to hear God speak, the Divine goodness becomes to us a reality. Sorrow is not God, and cannot change us; but sorrow may and does drive us back upon God, from whom we learn, and whose grace changes us. Some act of sin which startles and shames has been the means of warning many a one, who in heart has long gone astray. God has let him go, so as to fall and hurt himself, that he might return to the safe path and follow it with humble care.

Christ learned obedience and was made perfect by the things that He suffered. Though He never went astray, yet His sinless nature gained strength to do perfectly to the end His Father's will, by bearing what that will laid upon Him. We need to have our faults corrected and our slow wills aroused. God deals with us as with children, as gently as He can, but as firmly as is right for our good. Sin for the most part brings its own punishment. When we go astray, we leave the path in which blessings are, and wander where harm awaits us. We find out that God's Word is the one safe guide, and that if we would have what His Word promises, we must do what that Word teaches.

"*Thy zeal hath consumed me, because mine enemies have forgotten Thy words.*"—Ps. cxix. 139.

THE Psalmist is sorely tried by his foes, but it is their sin that stirs him most. He thinks of them, not mainly as men who hate and wrong him, but as men who treat his God and theirs with scorn. His love cannot rest. He is moved to make up by devoted zeal for the dishonour done to God. He tries as far as may be to counteract the influence of those who deny God's truth and set at nought His will. He feels that he cannot do enough. His zeal is more than his strength.

We live so in the midst of a world which cares not for God, that we are in danger of growing indifferent to the world's ways, and even of falling into those ways ourselves. We need at times to try to look, as if for the first time, at what goes on around us. God is in the world; He comes to men in countless ways of grace. The world is made and upheld by Him, and the world knows Him not. He warns and pleads; but in vain. There are other voices to which men give heed, and which make God's word as if it were not spoken. If the Law and the Gospel have been heard, how little are they kept in mind! Men live in no other way than they would live, had the work of Christ never been done or been made known. In the work of life, in politics, in trade, God is for the most part simply forgotten; and men would stare if an appeal were made to what He has said.

Nevertheless, God's word stands. His truth is the Truth. He does not add to or take from the faith which He calls on all men to learn and to obey. His laws bind men, whether they will hear or forbear, whether they like God's rule of duty or not. If an earthly friend be wronged, we do not stand by unmoved. What can we do that is enough for God and His word? They are our foes who slight Him to whom our highest loyalty and devotion are due, and who hinder His cause which is our dearest interest. If others fail, be it ours to show ourselves in earnest, reminding them of God's claim. What if our zeal consume us, wearing out strength that is unequal to what we would lay upon it! Though the outward man perish, the inward man is renewed by the grace which God gives for the daily effort.

"Do good, O Lord, unto those that be good, and to them that are upright in their hearts."—Ps. cxxv. 4.

THE words are a prayer of true faith. They speak confidence in what God will do. The Church must be hated and assailed; but God guards His people from being tempted beyond what they are able to bear. The good-will of God is ever held out for men of good-will. Grace waits for faith to receive it. Men go out from among God's people because they are not of them. In the time of testing they go over openly to the foe. They think that God's cause is lost, because they have not power to save it in their own way. Or they leave the path of guileless, straightforward duty, and walk in by-ways of their own choosing. They try to be safe by hiding their faith or making it suit the world's views, and by living as if the narrow road were broad.

God counts none His own who are not with Him, ready to be openly against what is not on His side. All others, whether the bold workers of iniquity, or the false and fainthearted who are ashamed of Christ and His truth, He will lead forth from where His grace is working; He will at last gather them out of His kingdom, when He gives His true Israel the blessing of eternal peace. The good God means good to all. By His goodness He leads men to repentance. He moves men's hearts and wills, and shows them what is good. If they still choose evil and turn from His call, He lets them have the fruit of their own doings, and find the end whither their crooked ways lead. His faithful ones shall have in full the good which He prepares for them, when all things that offend and they that do iniquity are taken out of the kingdom.

It is God's will to do us good. He has done us good by giving us through union with Christ a power of goodness. We are not good as we hope to be; but God, the only good One, works in us to will and do what is good. Our hearts are weak; we are ready to fall and turn aside; but we can, through the grace of God, have an honest and good heart to look to God for good, and to keep it and profit by it. So will God's blessing rest on us, as we drink in the grace that falleth oft from heaven. God will guide all things to work for our good; He will do us good by making us good, even very good, as His own new creation in Christ.

"The Lord will judge His people, and He will repent Himself concerning His servants."—Ps. cxxxv. 14.

THE world seems at times ready to crush the Church, and God's people are tempted to fear that He has left them in their foes' hands. God does use the powers of evil to carry out His judgments, and warn His people to repent and return to Him; but He does not forsake those whom He has chosen. He can, and He surely will, right the wronged, who look to Him and claim Him as their God. He will mark them as His own by what He does for them. He will repay for all that is done against them. As in old time He was "grieved for the miseries of Israel," so always He cares for His Church, even when her sorrows are the fruit of her sin.

Adversity must often do the work of love; but this is not the way in which God delights to bring His people to the promised land, and train them for its peace. God chastens His children not as He smites their foes. The triumph of the Church is sure; for God can do what pleases Him. We must at all times praise Him for past mercy and for the sure mercies yet in store. Our care must be that we do our part, and make our own calling and election sure. The Lord knoweth them that are His, who depart from iniquity as those who name the Name of Christ. He knows if we prize and use the privileges which are the portion of His people, holding fast to the blessings of the covenant. He knows if we strive to serve Him now in a life of faith, looking forward to that time when His servants shall serve Him and shall see His face.

We need not be tempted to avenge ourselves, or to be cast down by words or deeds that wrong us. God will take our part, if we are His people. If we are right, He will make the truth plain. If we are on His side, He will show Himself on ours. He may try us sorely by withholding the cheer and comfort which are the reward of those who serve Him; but we shall yet feel the love that feels for all we have to bear, and know the wise fatherly tenderness which we patiently trust now. The strongest powers of earth are powerless against God. We need not fear them. Why should we be misled, and bow down to the idols of the heathen, who know not the God who is revealed in Christ?

"*Incline not my heart to any evil thing, to practise wicked works with men that work iniquity: and let me not eat of their dainties.*"—Ps. cxli. 4.

IT is the prayer of one who feels how weak he is, and who longs to be kept from falling. God does not bend any heart or will astray. He alone can weaken the power of sin to charm and cheat. He shows what sin is, and to what it leads. He holds before the soul what is indeed worth seeking, and if need be, worth bearing loss to gain. There are pleasures of sin. He who tempts us knows well what draws our nature. The snares are hidden, so that it is not till the sweet is gone that we find out what the sinful joy has cost us. The pleasure offers itself at once. The harm to follow seems far off, and we think may in some way be escaped.

The worldly around us think it strange that we should hold aloof, guided by the will of an unseen Lord, and living for what is not given yet. They tell us to be careless as they are, keeping the Cross out of sight, and only living for the days that pass or for earthly good. Often there is much in even open sinners which is not without its charm. Gaiety of manner often covers the dreary gloom of a disappointed spirit. It is often put on in the effort not to think and not to feel. The sinful are not hard on others; for their standard of right is not a high one, and they will readily forgive what does not hurt their own ease or pride.

We must be like Moses, who chose to suffer with the people of God "rather than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." We must be like Daniel, who would not eat of the dainties which could not be eaten by him while he kept true to his God. We must be like David, who sought to live among those who feared God, even though they knew his sins and failings and told him plainly of them. There is, often among earnest people, a readiness to find fault, as there was in the time of David. We bless God, if He saves us from being misled by the flatteries of the wicked, and tempted to join with them in pleasant sin. We bless God, if He keeps us with those who seek to be true to Him, even though our place among them be a lowly one, and the home truths which we have to hear, however wholesome, have no sound of kindness.

"The Lord preserveth all them that love Him; but all the wicked will He destroy."—Ps. cxlv. 20.

GOD is always nigh to those who love His fatherly presence. The love we have to Him tells that He has shown Himself to us and brought near His love. When we mourn our want of love, His Spirit is stirring our hearts and preparing them to receive His love. Love may lead us to please God, even while our sense of shortcoming grieves us. True love will make us long, above all else, that the Divine love in which we trust should have its free way to work its ends of good. God wins our hearts, and gives us right desires; and as our aim grows higher, we find more comforting proof that He is with us, and that we are His. Thus, as faith helps love, love strengthens faith.

He who has saved out of the world, saves in the Church, and will keep unto full salvation those who look to Him as their Saviour. He who has made us His own, and has drawn our hearts to Him by the power of His own love, will preserve from evil, so that none shall pluck us out of His strong careful hand. Sometimes He may seem to destroy us, when He is indeed saving from that which would destroy. What seems wrath or hardness is the love that will not lose us, or let us lose our best treasures. A flood makes the world lonely to us, or the stroke of God takes away the evil in the midst of which we have lived, and sends us forth chastened, but delivered from temptations. Thus His love warns of the danger of sin, and draws our hearts to the things which are lasting because they are of God. He who loves us, and whom we love, will make all things work together for our good.

If we love God we long to be what He would have us be. We dread the evil within and around, which threatens to spoil us and to part us from Him. We are safe, while we leave ourselves in His hands, and seek the grace which is His love working for and in and by us. Who is He that will harm us, if we love God? He has His own ways of making our hold sure on what the Saviour has done for us already, and for keeping us earnest in watchful effort. He saves from dangers that we think not of, and hears the cry of the Holy Spirit in us asking what is best. He who preserves from day to day will preserve in the last day and for ever.

"*The Lord shall reign for ever, even Thy God, O Zion, unto all generations.*"—Ps. cxlvi. 10.

WE pray "Thy Kingdom come," and yet we say "Thine is the Kingdom." The Lord reigns over all that is; when He wills, He can make His power felt and owned. His laws bind and His purposes hold good, though the world forgets or scoffs. The kingdoms of this world shall become the Kingdom of God and of His Christ. All might that is of man and of this world comes to an end; God is for ever.

The Church is God's realm. In Zion He sets up His throne. There He calls men to come to do Him homage, and to receive His royal bounty. There He proclaims His laws, and sets in order what has to do with the good and peace of His subjects. There He trains and arms His soldiers, that He may send them forth to bring the world under His wise and holy rule. At times He has seemed to leave His throne, while confusion spread. Often we are tempted to fear when some great interest is at stake, and God's foes claim victory, and God makes no sign. Often we wonder what the end will be, when those to whom high trust has been given prove unfaithful. But the Church does not depend on men; she stands and lasts because God is her God, and He is eternal. We believe in the Church, though we may not see much that tells of her inward life. Faith, which knows of the King, knows of the Kingdom also.

We are glad to be sure in looking forward, and to know that the Zion which we love shall not be overthrown, or pass into the power of any other but her rightful King. So we are able to work and fight and endure, waiting for the triumph which must come. So we are comforted, when in our own beings the rule of God is assailed, and we feel as if its foundation were shaken. It is now the time for struggle; and if this be sore, we have proof that we are struggling and that God is claiming His rights. We love the Church in which Christ reigns in mercy and in righteousness. We prize our part in the strength and hope that are hers. True in our place and work, we can claim God as our God, and the great future of the Church is full of promise for us. When the short time of conflict has passed, we shall share the glory that is for ever.

INDEX OF VERSES.

FIRST DAY.

Ps. i. 2 .....p. 3
,, i. 3..... 34
,, i. 6..... 63
,, ii. 11 94
,, iii. 3 124
,, iii. 5 155
,, iii. 8 185
,, iv. 3 216
,, iv. 6 247
,, iv. 8 277
,, v. 3 308
,, v. 11 338

SECOND DAY.

Ps. ix. 1 4
,, ix. 4 35
,, ix. 10..... 64
,, ix. 11..... 95
,, ix. 13, 14 125
,, ix. 18.....156
,, x. 14 186
,, x. 17 217
,, xi. 1 248
,, xi. 4 278
,, xi. 5 309
,, xi. 7 339

THIRD DAY.

Ps. xv. 1 5
,, xvi. 5..... 36
,, xvi. 6..... 65
,, xvi. 7..... 96
,, xvi. 8.....126
,, xvi. 9.....157
,, xvi. 11 187
,, xvi. 11 218
,, xvii. 3 249
,, xvii. 4 279
,, xvii. 8 310
,, xvii. 15 340

FOURTH DAY.

Ps. xix. 1 .....p. 6
,, xix. 6..... 37
,, xix. 7..... 66
,, xix. 8..... 97
,, xix. 9.....127
,, xix. 11 158
,, xix. 12 188
,, xix. 13 219
,, xx. 1 250
,, xx. 6 280
,, xxi. 3.....311
,, xxi. 6.....341

FIFTH DAY.

Ps. xxiv. 1 7
,, xxiv. 3 38
,, xxiv. 5 67
,, xxv. 1 98
,, xxv. 5 128
,, xxv. 7 159
,, xxv. 9 189
,, xxv. 10 220
,, xxv. 13 251
,, xxv. 14 281
,, xxvi. 3 312
,, xxvi. 6 342

SIXTH DAY.

Ps. xxx. 1 8
,, xxx. 4 39
,, xxx. 5 68
,, xxx. 6, 7 99
,, xxxi. 2 129
,, xxxi. 5 160
,, xxxi. 14, 15 ...190
,, xxxi. 19.....221
,, xxxi. 20.....252
,, xxxi. 21.....282
,, xxxi. 23.....313
,, xxxi. 24.....343

SEVENTH DAY.

Ps. xxxv. 1 .....p. 9
,, xxxv. 3 40
,, xxxv. 9 69
,, xxxv. 10 100
,, xxxv. 18 130
,, xxxv. 27 161
,, xxxvi. 5.....191
,, xxxvi. 6.....222
,, xxxvi. 7.....253
,, xxxvi. 8.....283
,, xxxvi. 9.....314
,, xxxvi. 10 344

EIGHTH DAY.

Ps. xxxviii. 9 10
,, xxxviii. 14 ... 41
,, xxxviii. 21 ... 70
,, xxxix. 7.....101
,, xxxix. 12 131
,, xl. 1 162
,, xl. 2 192
,, xl. 5 223
,, xl. 6 254
,, xl. 10.....284
,, xl. 16.....315
,, xl. 17.....345

NINTH DAY.

Ps. xliv. 1 11
,, xliv. 3 42
,, xliv. 17..... 71
,, xliv. 22.....102
,, xlv. 2.....132
,, xlv. 2.....163
,, xlv. 4.....193
,, xlv. 10, 11.....224
,, xlvi. 1 255
,, xlvi. 4 285
,, xlvi. 5 316
,, xlvi. 10.....346

TENTH DAY.

Ps. l. 5.....p. 12
„ l. 14 43
„ l. 15 72
„ l. 23 103
„ li. 1 133
„ li. 2 164
„ li. 3, 4 194
„ li. 6 225
„ li. 10.....256
„ li. 12.....286
„ li. 17.....317
„ lii. 8 347

THIRTEENTH DAY.

Ps. lxviii. 1.....p. 15
„ lxviii. 3..... 46
„ lxviii. 5..... 75
„ lxviii. 6.....106
„ lxviii. 8.....136
„ lxviii. 9.....167
„ lxviii. 16 197
„ lxviii. 18 228
„ lxviii. 19 259
„ lxviii. 20 289
„ lxviii. 28 320
„ lxviii. 34 350

SIXTEENTH DAY.

Ps. lxxix. 1.....p. 18
„ lxxix. 9..... 49
„ lxxix. 13 78
„ lxxx. 1 109
„ lxxx. 3 139
„ lxxx. 4 170
„ lxxx. 14.....200
„ lxxx. 17, 18 ...231
„ lxxxi. 1.....262
„ lxxxi. 7.....292
„ lxxxi. 10 323
„ lxxxi. 12, 13 ...353

ELEVENTH DAY.

Ps. lvi. 3..... 13
„ lvi. 4..... 44
„ lvi. 8..... 73
„ lvi. 9.....104
„ lvi. 12 134
„ lvi. 13 165
„ lvii. 2 195
„ lvii. 3 226
„ lvii. 7, 8 257
„ lvii. 9 287
„ lviii. 3 318
„ lviii. 11.....348

FOURTEENTH DAY.

Ps. lxxi. 3 16
„ lxxi. 5 47
„ lxxi. 10–12 ... 76
„ lxxi. 16.....107
„ lxxi. 17.....137
„ lxxi. 20.....168
„ lxxii. 2, 3 198
„ lxxii. 6 229
„ lxxii. 13, 14 ...260
„ lxxii. 15.....290
„ lxxii. 16.....321
„ lxxii. 17.....351

SEVENTEENTH DAY.

Ps. lxxxvi. 1 19
„ lxxxvi. 2 50
„ lxxxvi. 9 79
„ lxxxvi. 11 110
„ lxxxvi. 15 140
„ lxxxvi. 17.....171
„ lxxxvii. 2 201
„ lxxxvii. 3 232
„ lxxxvii. 7 263
„ lxxxviii. 1, 2...293
„ lxxxviii. 14 ...324
„ lxxxviii. 18 ...354

TWELFTH DAY.

Ps. lxii. 1 14
„ lxii. 8 45
„ lxii. 11, 12 ... 74
„ lxiii. 1 105
„ lxiii. 1 135
„ lxiii. 2 166
„ lxiii. 3 196
„ lxiii. 5 227
„ lxiii. 8 258
„ lxiii. 11.....288
„ lxiv. 1 319
„ lxiv. 9 349

FIFTEENTH DAY.

Ps. lxxv. 1 17
„ lxxv. 3 48
„ lxxv. 7 77
„ lxxvi. 1, 2.....108
„ lxxvi. 8, 9.....138
„ lxxvi. 10 169
„ lxxvi. 11 199
„ lxxvii. 2.....230
„ lxxvii. 6.....261
„ lxxvii. 10 291
„ lxxvii. 14, 15...322
„ lxxvii. 19 352

EIGHTEENTH DAY.

Ps. xc. 1 20
„ xc. 2 51
„ xc. 12 80
„ xc. 14, 15 111
„ xc. 16 141
„ xc. 17 172
„ xci. 1.....202
„ xci. 11 233
„ xci. 14 264
„ xcii. 1 294
„ xcii. 5, 6 325
„ xcii. 13 355

NINETEENTH DAY.

Ps. xcv. 1, 2 ...p. 21
,, xcv. 2, 3 52
,, xcv. 6, 7 81
,, xcv. 7 112
,, xcv. 10 142
,, xcvi. 1 173
,, xcvi. 8 203
,, xcvi. 9 234
,, xcvii. 2 265
,, xcvii. 7 295
,, xcvii. 10 326
,, xcvii. 11 356

TWENTIETH DAY.

Ps. cii. 13 22
,, cii. 19, 20..... 53
,, cii. 24 82
,, cii. 27, 28.....113
,, ciii. 1.....143
,, ciii. 3.....174
,, ciii. 4.....204
,, ciii. 5.....235
,, ciii. 9, 10 266
,, ciii. 13 296
,, ciii. 17, 18.....327
,, ciii. 21 357

TWENTY-FIRST DAY.

Ps. cv. 1 23
,, cv. 3 54
,, cv. 4 83
,, cv. 7 114
,, cv. 8 144
,, cv. 15 175
,, cv. 19 205
,, cv. 24, 25 236
,, cv. 27 267
,, cv. 39 297
,, cv. 40, 41 328
,, cv. 44, 45 358

TWENTY-SECOND DAY.

Ps. cvii. 1 .....p. 24
,, cvii. 2 55
,, cvii. 7 84
,, cvii. 9 115
,, cvii. 14 145
,, cvii. 20 176
,, cvii. 29 206
,, cvii. 35 237
,, cvii. 36, 37 ...268
,, cvii. 40, 41 ...298
,, cvii. 42 329
,, cvii. 43 359

TWENTY-THIRD DAY.

Ps. cx. 1, 2 25
,, cx. 3 56
,, cx. 4 85
,, cx. 7 116
,, cxi. 2 146
,, cxi. 5 177
,, cxi. 10 207
,, cxii. 4 238
,, cxii. 6 269
,, cxii. 7 299
,, cxiii. 5, 6 330
,, cxiii. 7, 8 360

TWENTY-FOURTH DAY.

Ps. cxvi. 1 26
,, cxvi. 7 57
,, cxvi. 8, 9 86
,, cxvi. 13.....117
,, cxvi. 15.....147
,, cxvii. 1 178
,, cxviii. 6 208
,, cxviii. 14 239
,, cxviii. 17 270
,, cxviii. 19, 20 300*
,, cxviii. 22 331
,, cxviii. 25 361

TWENTY-FIFTH DAY.

Ps. cxix. 23.....p. 27
,, cxix. 35..... 58
,, cxix. 36..... 87
,, cxix. 37.....118
,, cxix. 41, 42 ...148
,, cxix. 45.....179
,, cxix. 49, 50 ...209
,, cxix. 54.....240
,, cxix. 59.....271
,, cxix. 63.....301
,, cxix. 66.....332
,, cxix. 67.....362

TWENTY-SIXTH DAY.

Ps. cxix. 105 28
,, cxix. 112 59
,, cxix. 115 88
,, cxix. 116 119
,, cxix. 122 149
,, cxix. 128 180
,, cxix. 129 210
,, cxix. 132 241
,, cxix. 133 272
,, cxix. 136 302
,, cxix. 137 333
,, cxix. 139 363

TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY.

Ps. cxx. 2 29
,, cxx. 7 60
,, cxxi. 5 89
,, cxxi. 8 120
,, cxxii. 1 150
,, cxxii. 6 181
,, cxxiii. 1.....211
,, cxxiii. 3.....242
,, cxxiv. 2, 3.....273
,, cxxiv. 7 303
,, cxxv. 2 334
,, cxxv. 4 364

TWENTY-EIGHTH DAY.

Ps. cxxxii. 5 ... p. 30
,, cxxxii. 7 61
,, cxxxii. 14 90
,, cxxxii. 15 121
,, cxxxii. 16 151
,, cxxxiii. 1 182
,, cxxxiii. 3 212
,, cxxxiv. 2 243
,, cxxxv. 3 274
,, cxxxv. 6 304
,, cxxxv. 13 335
,, cxxxv. 14 365

TWENTY-NINTH DAY.

Ps. cxxxix. 1 31
Ps. cxxxix. 6 ...p. 62
,, cxxxix. 7 91
,, cxxxix. 14 122
,, cxxxix. 17 152
,, cxxxix. 24 183
,, cxl. 4 213
,, cxl. 7 244
,, cxl. 13 275
,, cxli. 2 305
,, cxli. 3 336
,, cxli. 4 366

THIRTIETH DAY.

Ps. cxliv. 1 32
,, cxliv. 3 92
,, cxlv. 1 123
Ps. cxlv. 8 .....p. 153
,, cxlv. 18 184
,, cxlv. 9 214
,, cxlv. 10 245
,, cxlv. 14 276
,, cxlv. 15 306
,, cxlv. 19 337
,, cxlv. 20 367

THIRTY-FIRST DAY.

Ps. cxlvi. 5 33
,, cxlvi. 7 93
,, cxlvi. 8 154
,, cxlvi. 8 215
,, cxlvi. 9 246
,, cxlvi. 9 307
,, cxlvi. 10 368

Printed at the University Press, Oxford

By HORACE HART, *Printer to the University*

Ten different Editions are published.

THE DAILY ROUND

MEDITATION, PRAISE AND PRAYER

ADAPTED TO THE COURSE OF THE CHRISTIAN YEAR.

Imperial 32mo, cloth, 3*s.*; Turkey roan, gilt edges, 4*s.* 6*d.*;
Morocco, gilt edges, 6*s.*
Fcap. 8vo, cloth, 4*s.* 6*d.*; Turkey roan, gilt edges, 6*s.*;
Morocco, gilt edges, 9*s.*

"The aim of THE DAILY ROUND is to help, day by day, in few plain words, those who wish to know God's truth, to gain God's grace, and to do God's will. The course of the Church's Year, and the Order of the Church's Services, are followed. Thus the deep things of God, the mysterious workings of grace, and the laws that claim to rule man's life, are dealt with as they come.

"Each page has five parts: 1. Some words of Scripture. 2. A short statement of what those words mean and teach. 3. Some thoughts and reflections intended to bring home the general lesson, and make it of personal, practical use. 4. A prayer, in which what has been brought before the mind and heart is laid before God. 5. A verse of a hymn."—PREFACE.

"THE DAILY ROUND is a sort of Churchman's Bogatsky's 'Treasury' with text, comment, reflection, prayer and verse for every day in the year. When we say that almost all the Bishops have heartily praised it, and that it has approved itself to men so unlike in their views as Bishop Fraser and Canon Liddon, we feel that further commendation on our part would be superfluous. Still we will add that for spirituality, combined (as it too seldom is) with practical soberness of thought, the manual seems to us unmatched. It is this which makes it so thoroughly in harmony with the spirit of the Church whose liturgical order it follows."—*Graphic.*

"The Right Rev. Dr. W. WALSHAM HOW, Bishop of Wakefield, says:—"I have used the book for some time, and I value it more and more. It is most useful and suggestive."

The late BISHOP OF MANCHESTER (Dr. FRASER) said:—"I have examined and tested THE DAILY ROUND rather carefully, and find it to be a book after my own heart—calm, sober, well-proportioned, and with an eminently healthy and firm grasp of Christian truth. It appears to me to be framed according to that 'sound rule of faith' and that 'sober standard of feeling,' than which the saintly author of the 'Christian Year' says 'there is nothing of so much consequence in matters of practical religion,' and which are in such entire harmony with the spirit of the Church of England. It is a book likely to be of much service to many souls; and I wish for it a circulation proportionate to its usefulness."

London: J. WHITAKER & SONS, 12, Warwick Lane.

THE DAILY ROUND

Has received the commendation of the following

ARCHBISHOPS.
Canterbury (TAIT).
do. (BENSON).
York
Armagh (BERESFORD)
do. (KNOX).

BISHOPS.
London (JACKSON).
do. (TEMPLE).
Durham
Winchester
Aberdeen
Argyle
Auckland
Ballarat
Bangor
Bath and Wells
Bombay
Calcutta
Carlisle
Chester (JACOBSON).
Chichester
Colombo
Derry
Dover
Down and Connor
Edinburgh (COTTERILL).
Ely (WOODFORD).
do. (COMPTON).
Gibraltar
Glasgow (WILSON).
Gloucester
Guiana
Hereford
Kilmore (DARLEY).
Lichfield
Lincoln (WORDSWORTH).
Llandaff (OLLIVANT).
Manchester (FRASER).
Montreal
Moray (EDEN).
Norwich
Ossory
Oxford
Ripon (BICKERSTETH)
Rochester
St. Andrews
St. Asaph
St. Davids
Salisbury (MOBERLEY).
Sierra Leone (CHEETHAM).
Sodor and Man (HILL).
Tuam
Truro
Wakefield
Western New York
Worcester

And many other Eminent Divines.

Feap. 8vo, cloth, 4*s.* 6*d.* ; Turkey Roan, gilt edges, 6*s.* ; Morocco, 9*s.*

DAILY LIFE

A Series of Essays, by the Author of "The Daily Round."

"This book comes from the same pen which wrote THE DAILY ROUND and has an equal measure of good sense and opportuneness. It is made up of some two or three hundred brief chapters, dealing with points of Faith, Duty and Religious knowledge. The writer frequently draws upon his own personal experience for illustrations and anecdotes. His stories, and the concise comments he makes on them, are always suggestive. Any preacher who feels that the fount of inspiration has run dry, would find at least a score of new topics in these pages, to say nothing of old themes revivified and handled in a fresh way."—GUARDIAN.

WORDS FROM THE CROSS: Meditations upon the Seven Sayings of Our Blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Packet of Twelve, price 1*s.*

THE BISHOP OF WINCHESTER:
"All I have read of the book approves itself entirely to my judgment and feelings. I have not time to examine it carefully; but as far as I have read it seems to me by far the best thing of the kind: earnest, pious and wise, I cannot doubt that it will be a great help to devotion."

THE BISHOP OF LICHFIELD:
"Now that I have had time to look more carefully at THE DAILY ROUND I must write to say that I believe it will be most useful and acceptable. The tone of it is excellent, and I have not yet come upon anything at all likely to offend."

THE BISHOP OF CHICHESTER:
"The system upon which the book is constructed, inasmuch as it follows the course of the Church's seasons and produces a text of Scripture, application, and prayer for every day, may greatly assist the numerous class who, having but little time for devotional exercises, yet desire regular nourishment for their soul's health. The teaching, so far as I have been able to examine it, is of a sound tone and wholesome influence, entirely in accordance with the Book of Common Prayer."

THE BISHOP OF WORCESTER:
"The writer of it is known to me, and I think THE DAILY ROUND will be of great service."

THE BISHOP OF DERRY:
"THE DAILY ROUND appears to be a most judicious and admirable book of devout meditation. The use must certainly help many in knowing God's Truth and doing God's Will. The way in which the references to the Seasons of the Church, and the Order of the Christian Seasons are interwoven with the whole teaching of the meditations is peculiarly excellent."

THE BISHOP OF EDINBURGH (DR. COTTERILL):
"I now find on looking at the book what a valuable contribution to Devotional literature your book is. I observe in the printed opinions so much that confirms the impression as to the practical value of the book which I have formed on a hasty investigation of it, that I shall have no hesitation in recommending it as far as lies in my power."

THE REV. CANON LIDDON:
"Such a book could only be fairly estimated when it had been used for a year. But I have looked into it sufficiently to say at least this much, that I am greatly struck by its resolute insistence upon the connection between devotion and practice—in other words, by its moral backbone; many of our devotional books are somewhat deficient in this respect, and the failure where it exists is a serious one. . . I congratulate the writer upon a work which cannot but help a great many souls to serve God truly and earnestly in the state of life in which He has placed them."

THE REV. CANON GREGORY:
"I have looked carefully through THE DAILY ROUND, and it seems to me carefully prepared, and likely to be a most useful book for those who wish to devote a short time each day to pious thought and meditation, and have only a short time that they can so devote. The entire absence of controversy is a great recommendation."

ARCHDEACON SANCTUARY:
"I have long been of opinion that a work on the model of 'Bogatsky,' harmonising with the teaching of the Prayer Book and the order of the Christian Year, was very much to be desired, and this DAILY ROUND seems to me admirably to supply the desideratum. I shall be glad of the opportunity of commending the book."

ARCHDEACON DENISON:
"I have to send you all my thanks for your book. It is full of the best guidance, help and comfort, and will profit many."

ARCHDEACON HESSEY:
"The thoughts for one day are never like the thoughts for any other day, though generally pervaded by the same Christian and Church-like tone. The author has always something to say and says it in the happiest manner. I shall recommend it wherever I can, for I am sure it will do good."

ARCHDEACON EMERY:
"The short, well-weighed meditation, the wholesome thoughts, the holy aspirations, and important practical lessons for each day, cannot fail, with the divine blessing, to form a very valuable help to the devout reader.

"The idea is excellent, and it has been most successfully carried out. We think that it will supply a want which we have long felt of something on the lines of Bogatsky's 'Golden Treasury, but with more definite Church teaching. The style is terse and pithy; every word tells: the quantity of matter compressed within a single page is quite astonishing. The tone of the meditations and prayers is simple, earnest and devout, with nothing morbid or overstrained. We heartily recommend the book, as one calculated to foster a spirit of sound practical Church of England piety, while there is nothing to wound the susceptibilities of any school of Churchmen; and we trust that it may have a circulation as wide as that of the work to which it owes its title."—*Church Quarterly Review.*

"We have here a page of devotional matter for every day in the year, including All Saints' Day, so that a perfect sequence of the Church's teaching is presented for meditation. Numerous and valuable as are the opinions given of the book from high quarters, they are not more favourable than the work deserves. In its handsome dress it would be a most suitable gift to offer at such periods of life as Confirmation, First Communion, &c."—
Church Times.

"We heartily commend the book."
Penny Post.

"A capital little manual. . . . Each page is a distinct and complete study. . . . It expresses a manly tone of piety above the level of sentimentality and emotionalism."—
Church Review.

"Taken as a whole, the book is of a more decided Church character, and therefore a great improvement upon all but a very few works of this kind that have gone before it. There is a good Index of Subjects, and the book will be of use in the composition of sermons."—
Literary Churchman.

"Free from party bias, yet Churchlike in tone and teaching."—*School Guardian.*

"It has been well received, and may fairly be ranked amongst the best works of the class to which it belongs. Issued as it is in elegant binding, it forms a most suitable present for a Christian friend."—
Rock.

"Those who feel the need for a manual of meditation, prayer and praise for daily use, will prize this work. Under the conviction that religion is for the whole life, and for every hour of life, and not for its close or stray hours, the author has striven to help the reader to do his daily duty in the spirit of the Word of God. The plan followed is that suggested by the Church Calendar, so that a systematic consideration of Divine things is ensured." — *The Christian.*

"One of the best books of private devotion we have met with."—*Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette.*

"Likely to become as great a favourite as that old-fashioned book of devotion, 'Bogatzky.' . . . . The work must have special fitness for its purpose when it receives the commendation of Christian men of diverse schools of thought and modes of feeling—the Bishop of London and the Bishop of Manchester, the Dean of Canterbury and the Dean of Norwich, Canon Liddon and Canon Tristram. Our extracts show that it is earnest, thoughtful and practical."—*Sunday at Home.*

"Among the best works that we know of for daily devotional use, is a book which has been brought under our notice by Mr. Whitaker. It is called THE DAILY ROUND, and furnishes upon each page, for every day in the year, helps towards meditation prayer and praise. The course of the Christian Year is observed, beginning with the first Sunday in Advent, and closing with the twenty-sixth Saturday after Trinity. At the head of each page stands a passage of Scripture suited to the season; then follow suggestive comments and meditations. It is professed to be its aim 'to help, day by day, in few, plain words, those who wish to know God's truth, to gain God's grace, and to do God's will;' and it is claimed for this book that it is the only one of its kind 'which so completely, successfully and loyally carries out the teaching of the Church of England, warm, devout, yet sober, calm and uncontroversial.' We can say frankly, that it is an unusual book in its combination of devout, practical, reflective and sensible piety. We cordially commend it to our readers."—
Christian World.

THE BOOK OF PRIVATE PRAYER

ISSUED BY DIRECTION OF THE LOWER HOUSE OF CONVOCATION OF THE PROVINCE OF CANTERBURY. Three Editions.

I.

SHORT FORMS OF DAILY PRAYER.

Cloth, 6*d.* ; neatly bound, with gilt edges, price 1*s.* 6*d.*

II.

FORMS OF PRIVATE PRAYER FOR USE TWICE DAILY AND ON VARIOUS OCCASIONS.

With Responsive Forms of Family Prayer for a Week.

Cloth, 2*s.* ; neatly bound, with gilt edges, 3*s.* 6*d.*

III.

FOR USE SEVEN TIMES A DAY.

A New Edition, Revised and Enlarged. Cloth, 3*s.*; Roan, gilt edges, 4*s.* 6*d.*

Two Vols., fcap. 8vo, cloth, 6*s.*

THE GOSPEL STORY

A Plain Commentary on the Four Holy Gospels.

Containing the Narrative of our Blessed Lord's Life and Ministry, in Simple Language.

By Rev. W. MICHELL, M.A.

"Everyone who knows THE GOSPEL STORY will welcome the new edition. It is revised; it is improved in type and in binding; and it is sold at a lower price. The modest title of the book fails to give an idea of the great store of information and of sound theology that can be found in it. One of the foremost authorities in the English Church has declared it to be the best commentary on the Gospels we have. There are 907 pages in the two volumes, which contain 463 chapters. Hardly a question which would occur to an ordinary reader of the Gospels does not find clear, full treatment. The way in which deep matters of theology are dealt with, so as to set forth the truth in plain form, is something to thank God for. Those who use one book of religious reading can choose no better. Sunday School teachers will find it a help in trying to bring home to the young the lessons of our Lord's life and words. It is suited to the unlearned and the learned alike. It is so simple that no one can fail to understand it, and it is so full of matter so freshly and forcibly put that no one can fail to learn from it. There is a growing feeling of the value of the words that Christ spoke and the works that He did which show Him to us. Those who wish for a trustworthy guide through the pages of the Gospels cannot do better than buy THE GOSPEL STORY."—*The Gospeller.*

DEVOTIONAL READINGS FOR FAMILY PRAYER

FOR EVERY DAY IN THE CHRISTIAN YEAR.

With Form of Responsive Devotions for the Household for Every Day in One Week. By the Rev. J. J. DILLON, M.A., Rector of Aghade, in the Diocese of Leighlin.

Vol. I. MORNING. | Vol. II. EVENING.

Two Volumes, imperial 32mo, cloth, 6*s.* ; Turkey roan, 9*s.*

A New Edition, revised.

In very large type, bound in limp cloth, price 7*d*.

THE HOLY COMMUNION

PART I. ITS NATURE AND BENEFITS.

With a Notice of some common Objections to receiving it.

PART II. AN EXPLANATION OF WHAT IS REQUIRED OF THOSE WHO COME TO THE LORD'S SUPPER.

In plain Language.

By the Rev. W. H. RIDLEY, M.A.,

Rector of Hambleden, Bucks; Hon. Canon of Christ's Church, Oxford.

Canon Ridley's "Holy Communion" has now been many years in use in thousands of parishes: no other work has been found so generally acceptable. The plain, forcible language in which it is written, and the sound practical advice it contains, combine to render the book a great favourite, especially among the poorer classes.

"We conceive that the extensive circulation of this unpretending treatise would probably do more in many places to draw people to the Communion Table as worthy recipients than any of the more elaborate works on the same subject."—*Morning Post.*

Printed in very large type, on fine thick paper.

THE HOLY COMMUNION

By the Rev. Canon RIDLEY.

Cloth, red edges, 1*s*.; Turkey Roan, gilt edges, 2*s*.

Other Works by the Rev. Canon RIDLEY.

18mo, cloth, red edges, 9*d*.

ON PRAYING

The Necessity and Advantage of Diligent Prayer.

18mo, cloth, 1*s*.

THE PATH OF DUTY

A few plain Directions for more worthily performing: —

I. OUR DUTY TOWARDS GOD.

II. OUR DUTY TOWARDS OUR NEIGHBOUR.

CONFIRMATION & FIRST COMMUNION

PART I. THE NATURE, ORIGIN AND BENEFITS OF CONFIRMATION.

With Aids to Meditation for Young Persons preparing for that Holy Rite.

PART II. PREPARATION FOR CONFIRMATION.

PART III. PREPARATION FOR FIRST COMMUNION.

Uniform in size and type with Canon RIDLEY'S Work on "The Holy Communion." Cloth, 9*d*.; Turkey roan, gilt edges, 2*s*.

In cloth, 6*d.*; or neatly bound, with gilt edges, 1*s.* 6*d.*

THE NARROW WAY

A COMPLETE MANUAL OF DEVOTION.

With a Guide to Confirmation and Holy Communion.

THE NARROW WAY *is something more than a book for the Young or for Confirmation Candidates: it is a complete Vade Mecum of Christian Faith and Practice; and, without exception, is the best and most useful book to place in the hands of adults who have been imperfectly taught, or of those who have recently joined the Church from the ranks of dissent.*

"I must thank you for the new editions of THE NARROW WAY. I have used the book for years, finding no book so useful for all purposes in parish work. It has so much in it, and not too much upon any one subject; and all is so well and clearly stated that it suits all ages and all needs. . . Most works have to be supplemented by some other book: but THE NARROW WAY goes over the ground of Christian faith and duty with great completeness. I give it to Confirmation Candidates, and to persons preparing for Communion; to enquirers who wish to learn what to believe and do, and how to pray. And I find it a most helpful companion to the sick and troubled. The Introductions and devotions are taken from the best sources; and there is a good index which can be marked according to the needs of those who use the book."—*From a* CLERGYMAN.

THE NARROW WAY. An Edition is printed in Large Type, cloth, 1*s.*; neatly bound, with gilt edges, 2*s.*

THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER and THE NARROW WAY. Bound in One neat Volume, price, in Turkey Roan, gilt edges, 2*s.*

Y FFORD GUL. "THE NARROW WAY" in Welsh. Price 1*s.* cloth.

THE APOCRYPHA—THE UNCANONICAL AND APOCRYPHAL SCRIPTURES: Being the Additions to the Old Testament Canon which were included in the Ancient Greek and Latin Versions; the English Text of the Authorised Version; together with the Additional Matter found in the Vulgate and other Ancient Versions, Introductions to the several Books and Fragments, Marginal Notes and References, and a General Introduction to the Apocrypha.

By the Rev. W. R. CHURTON, B.D.,

Fellow of King's College, Cambridge; Canon of the Cathedral of St. Albans and Examining Chaplain to the Bishop.

Crown 8vo, pp. 607, 7*s.* 6*d.*; morocco, gilt edges, 14*s.*

Large 8vo, handsomely bound in cloth, 10*s.* 6*d.*

ACTS OF THE CHURCH, 1531–1885.—

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND HER OWN REFORMER as testified by the Records of her Convocation.

By the late Rev. JAMES WAYLAND JOYCE, M.A.

THE RULE OF PRAYER: An Easy

Explanation of the Lord's Prayer. Chiefly intended for the Use of Young Persons. 32mo, cloth, 1*s.*

In the press, a New Edition, Revised and Enlarged.

THE GOLDEN GATE

A COMPLETE MANUAL OF INSTRUCTIONS, DEVOTIONS AND PREPARATIONS.

By the Rev. S. BARING-GOULD.

MANUALS FOR SELF-INSTRUCTION.

How to Learn French, German, Latin, Italian or German without a Master. Each, 1*s.* 6*d.*

WHITAKER'S ALMANACK. An Al-

manack for the Year of our Lord MDCCCLXXXVIII. By JOSEPH WHITAKER, F.S.A. Containing an Account of the Astronomical and other Phenomena; a large amount of information respecting the Government, Finances, Population, Commerce and general Statistics of the British Empire throughout the World, with some Notices of other Countries, &c. &c. A very closely-printed, compact volume of 672 pages, containing an immense mass of well-arranged information. Neatly bound, leather back and cloth sides, 2*s.* 6*d.*

A Shilling Edition containing 408 pages is also published.

Crown 8vo, neatly bound, top edge gilt, price 5*s.*

CLASSICAL & FOREIGN QUOTATIONS

Law Terms and Maxims, Proverbs, Mottoes, Phrases and Expressions in French, German, Greek, Italian, Latin, Spanish and Portuguese. With Translations, References, Explanatory Notes and Indexes. By W. FRANCIS HENRY KING, M.A., Christ Church, Oxford.

An entirely New and Original Work. To ensure verbal accuracy, every Quotation has been compared with the Work whence it was drawn. The author's name and place of the extract cited are appended.